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Visiting the Past and Eyeing the Future: Lessons We Can Learn from a 1995 Art Education Instructional Television Series

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Visiting the Past and Eyeing the Future: Lessons We Can Learn from a 1995 Art Education Instructional Television Series

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis research to my grandmother, Patricia Madigan Smith, and my grandfather, Thomas Fleming Smith. Their encouragement and support, coupled with a chance encounter at the Washington Kennedy Center, was the impetus for my pursuit of an advanced degree. I am forever grateful for this lasting gift of education and the impact that it has had on my life.

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Abstract

Visiting the Past and Eyeing the Future: Lessons We Can Learn from a 1995 Art Education Instructional Television Series

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Through the use of a case study methodology, this research presents a qualitative analysis of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*, an instructional art education television series from 1995. In recognition of the reality that no lesson in the field is value-neutral, the study seeks to determine the implicit and explicit messages about art education communicated through the various features of the series. The dominant art educational message is established with the use of an essential tool: a 2008 list of 45 puropses for art education. Using this list, the study distills the eight epsiodes of *Eureka!* down to their central, most frequently espoused messages. This information is then used to enhance understanding of how an effective art educator presents material, as well as how a successful art education television program may function.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*—an educational television series from 1995—to investigate implicit and explicit messages about art education given in this program. This PBS series, which was geared toward students aged 7 to 12 and distributed directly to schools until 2010, features an energetic host who visits art sites, interviews artists and conducts artmaking demonstrations as a means of both engaging students directly and helping teachers structure art lessons. I looked at each epsisode in the series (eight 15-minute segements) through a theoretical lens of purposes for art education that have been identified by other art educators. I used this analysis to determine what kind of information is being presented in this television series about the underlying purposes for learning about art.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the dominant art educational approach taken by the producers of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*, and what messages does this program espouse about the reasons for learning about art? How can we make use of this information about the purposes of art education to enhance our understanding of (a) how an effective art educator presents material, and (b) how a successful art education television program may function?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

My goal was to answer this central research question in order to discover core beliefs about artmaking—specifically, the beliefs that are conveyed in art education television programming made for classroom consumption. Although the first season

Eureka! series was 15 years old at the time I conducted my research, I believe that discussing this series' underlying philosophies regarding art education can contribute to our understanding of the motivations that drive today's young artists as well as provide a framework from which to evaluate the performance-based messages we send to our students.

MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH

My personal motivations for undertaking this study were partially connected with my background in mass media. Much of my undergraduate training, which I received informally through work for the college newspaper, was concerned with making sense of large amounts of information and presenting the most relevant facts to a mass audience. This task of furthering public understanding by communicating information in a succinct and appealing way was, for me, the best leadership role for which I could possibly have asked. And although I ultimately decided that the uncertainties inherent in the profession outweighed my desire to stay in journalism, my interest in the mass media remains strong. I wanted to broaden my understanding of the intersection of art education and mass media and did so by taking a close look at the subtleties of this little-explored relationship.

I am also fascinated with people's reasons for creating art. In our era, methods for producing and designing visual images proliferate at a rapid rate. Cheap, accessible, and easy means of producing media has made it possible for nearly anyone to participate in the act of artistic creation; photography, video production, and digital design software has opened doors for people of all skill to incorporate such creation into their professions and daily lives. Why is it, then, that artists worldwide persist in the painstaking process of producing hand-made objects—paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures and installations,

to name a few—that are often ineffective in competing for everyday viewers' attention in this flashy marketplace of the mass-produced object and image? I believed that identifying the messages contained within *Eureka!* would be useful in revealing the mysterious, intangible pull that drives many contemporary artists to practice traditional, hand-crafted methods.

Lastly, I entered this study with a belief that in analyzing the messages conveyed by *Eureka!*'s host, art instructor Franz Spohn, I would heighten my awareness of what I myself was unconsciously communicating to students with my instruction and conversation during technique demonstrations, selection of material for lesson plans and answers to their questions. Thus, I was personally motivated to undergo this research because I believed that my process and findings would help me to recognize, sort out, and improve my own teaching practices.

My professional motivations sprung partially from instances in which I had observed that many students opted out of the artmaking process after leaving elementary school. After all, whether students will continue making art after their elementary school years (where art class is often required for all students) depends in large part on whether or not they can identify meaningful reasons to do so. Art educational television programming was—and continues to be—one of the media through which we art educators can impart messages that will either, (a) make sense to students and thus fuel their continued desire to produce art as a matter of choice, or (b) be ineffective in competing against other sources of interest as students outgrow elementary school.

I was also driven to learn about art educational television programming because very little research exists on the topic, despite the wealth of information that was available on other didactic technologies. I aimed to contribute to our field's body of knowledge regarding how to evaluate educational television programming. Most

importantly, I believed that my findings would have applicability to in-person methods of teaching; ideally, it would help raise teachers' awareness of what messages students were likely taking away from their instruction.

HYPOTHESIS/SPECULATION ABOUT THIS INVESTIGATION

I hypothesized that I would find that the underlying philosophy of the series was most closely aligned with a philosophy of art education that emphasizes art for the purpose of fostering cognitive and developmental growth in children. In this same vein, I predicted that a majority percentage of the stated and implied motivations for artmaking would be centered upon the belief that the end-goal of making art in school is not to become an artist, but to develop skills that will aid in reaching fulfilling experiences and meeting life's challenges.

On the other hand, I believed that a significant portion of *Eureka!* screen time would be devoted to fostering art appreciation. Since this value falls within the subject-centered orientation of art education, I knew that such a finding would indicate that the series' core values would be a blend of philosophical ideas about the value of art education.

RESEARCH METHODS

I used a case study methodology to conduct my research and to interpret my findings. I chose to use this approach, instead of another approach such as having a group of students view the series and respond to it, because I was interested in distilling the episodes down to their central, most frequent messages. In this way, my study had elements of phenomenological research built in.

I analyzed the content of the eight episodes of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*—each one of which is 15 minutes in length. Using a list of 45 recognized purposes for art

education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10), I kept a tally of those purposes that were implicitly and explicitly conveyed during the course of each 15-minute episode of the show (two hours of programming in total).[1] After each episode, I followed up the tallying procedure with an analysis of the information contained within the corresponding lesson plan in the accompanying 56-page teacher's guide, entitled *A Teacher's Guide: Eureka! The Creative Arts Series* (Murray & Spohn, 1995).

Examining the messages conveyed on screen and in the accompanying lesson plan meant that I also took a close look at logistical choices that the producers made in filming each *Eureka!* episode. The location in which a particular episode was filmed, for example, speaks volumes about the beliefs and values of the producers. In one episode, for instance, the series host spends much of his time on a playground. In another, he spent about half the episode in an artist's studio. I embarked on my research with the intent to conduct analysis that would help us understand what the beliefs of the producers were in considering their purposes of art education.

While sitting in front of the screen and watching each episode, I listened and observed carefully to identify statements, actions and choices that indicated support for any one of the 45 recognized purposes for art education (Congdon et al., 2008, p. 9-10). For instance, if Spohn were to make a comment addressing the importance of studio time as a respite from the stress of math class, I would put a tally next to recognized Purpose #9, which characterizes art as "provid[ing] a break from other school subjects" (Congdon et al., 2008 p. 9). I used the same note-taking method for quantifying which purposes were most frequently espoused in the teacher's guide.

[1] See chapter 3 for a list of the 45 recognized purposes

As a note, I want to emphasize that I was not concerned solely with the producers' intent. Rather, I was interested in identifying the purposes of art education that could be gleaned from statements and actions of those involved in the show—whether or not the producers and host clearly intended for those statements to reach the audience.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE): A view that sees art as a discipline of study and should be situated within core education requirements. DBAE conceives of art in four sub-discipline areas: aesthetics, criticism, art history and art production. It was introduced as a term by Dwaine Greer (1984), and supported by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts and advocated by numerous art educators, including Elliot Eisner.

Content-centered art education: A form of art education where the subject to be taught/learned considers art to be a body of knowledge.

Child-centered art education: A process-oriented view that sees art education as a means of fostering creative and mental growth and unlocking creative potential. Often associated with the ideas and work of Viktor Lowenfeld (1903-1960).

Society-entered art education: A view that emphasizes meeting community or group social needs through art education content derived from broad societal needs or problems.

Formalism: A theory/philosophy that stresses the importance of formal visual elements of art. Labels, associations, or symbolic meanings are not considered in assessing the success of the work; the formal arrangement of elements are the basis on which to judge excellence.

Expressivism: A theory/philosophy concerned with the expressive qualities of a work; the depth and intensity of emotion conveyed. Excellence is determined by how well the work communicates ideas and feelings to the audience.

Betacam: A family of professional videotape products developed by Sony in 1982. In colloquial use, "Betacam" is often used to refer to either the Betacam camcorder or the Betacam tape.

Beta SP: A more advanced version of the Betacam videotape format. Beta SP was launched in 1986.

PBS: Acronym for Public Broadcasting System

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Of the two seasons of ECAS that were produced, I focused only on Season One, which consists of eight 15-minute episodes. I also grouped Bolin's 45 recognized purposes for art education into four main categories according to theme, which was helpful as a method of simplifying information and adding organizational structure to my research. This process is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

As mentioned, I was not concerned with the direct intent of the producers and was therefore free of the need to conduct interviews or undergo other methods to discern their beliefs and motivations. I did not focus on the broader topic of art educational programming as much as I sought to know what *this specific* program (eight 15-minute segments) communicates about the reasons and purposes for art education.

BENEFITS TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION

In addition to intending that my research would benefit future art educators, I aimed to make my research useful to the fields of educational technology and media studies. Ideally, my research will spur other studies in art educational television programming and is useful for analyzing (more generally) how we convey messages about artmaking through the medium of television. My long-term goals for research are centered on my belief that we need to understand how we are communicating meaning

through our actions during classroom art instruction. Additionally, I knew that a stronger presence in the body of research on educational television programming would increase visibility for art education as a rich, important discipline.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Through my investigation of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*, I sought to find and quantify the program's implicit and explicit messages about the reasons that exist for learning art in schools and other sites. Through this research, I aimed to investigate how an educator's demeanor, curriculum choices, and comments in front of a student audience can convey meaning about the artmaking process.

This section begins with an examination of some of the most prominent models of art education. Under this first heading, I have compiled the work of researchers who, throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, have posited widely varied purposes for teaching art. Under the next heading, I discuss the performative, theatrical aspects of teaching as defined by writers who have found best-practice methods for communicating with a student audience in an effective and engaging way. I then continue with a review of several works within the discipline of Media Studies, using books and articles from which I gained a better understanding of how to speak and write about the medium of television. Lastly, I have included a section of literature on visual culture, a favorite angle of many postmodern educators for whom everyday, so-called pedestrian objects and media are more intriguing objects of study than the canonical artworks of the past.

SUBJECT-CENTERED MODELS OF ART EDUCATION

In order to distill the central purposes for art education as defined by *Eureka!*, it is important to gain a detailed understanding of the frameworks for art education that others have laid on the discipline. I started with the writings of Manuel Barkan (1970), who illuminates his belief that the foremost goal of art educators should be to give students a firm understanding of the subject matter of art. Barkan offers some background on the

inception of the child-centered philosophy, which he characterizes as a reactionary movement spurred by a widespread rejection of all academic criteria in art education. He concedes that developmental growth may indeed occur while the student is learning to think and behave like an artist—but maintains that such growth is a secondary goal. "This new idea," says Barkan (1970) in defense of his model, "does not imply the slightest suggestion of academic rigidity. It simply asserts that to learn through art one must act like an artist" (p. 16). Specifically, in referencing the progressive education and child study movements, he cites those that took place around 1930 and which he associates with John Dewey, William James, Maria Montessori, Franz Cizek, and the Francis Parker School: "The educational *goals* thus incorporated into the teaching of art became the preservation of youthful spontaneity, the attention to developmental tendencies, and the absolute protection of children from adult standards" (p. 18). Indeed, says Barkan of the 1930s era, "the study of art appreciation virtually disappeared from most schools, and many art teachers even argued strongly that looking at works of art was detrimental for children" (p. 18). The main tenets of Barkan's philosophy are that (a) art teachers should behave like artists, that (b) students should study and have acquaintance with great works of art, and that (c) students should gain dexterity with a limited array of art materials rather than mere familiarity with the whole spectrum of art media.

It is, however, in Elliot Eisner's 1972 *Educating Artistic Vision* that this idea gains more depth and clarity. In this book, Eisner describes the "triadic relationship" of orientations to art education (p. 58), asserting that most art education theories favor one point of the triangle over the other two. The first chapter of the book deals with the justifications for teaching art and gives a good summary of the contrasts between child-centered (the process approach), subject-centered (the essentialist approach) and society-centered (social engagement) approach. Eisner, an essentialist who strongly emphasizes

visual training, later uses the coined term, Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), to convey his belief that art needs to be treated as a discipline in its own right. Eisner's justifications for teaching art present an exhaustive explanation of what it means to be a subject-centered educator will therefore aid me in the task of categorizing the messages conveyed in *Eureka!* into a particular philosophy of art education. His 1987 article about the role of DBAE in schools serves as a useful, more application-based explanation of what a DBAE curriculum entails.

Eisner's *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002), expands upon his subject-based framework in arguing for the legitimacy of art as a core school subject. As DBAE is described in Eisner's book, activities are goal-oriented, curriculum is focused on content, and art has a solid place within general education. When an episode of *Eureka!* seems to focus, for example, on training students to practice as an artist does, information from this book was a useful reference in helping me to analyze the mental growth that Eisner believes occurs through this form of instruction.

Clark and Zimmerman (1981) reinforce Eisner's theories by emphasizing the unique contributions that art can make toward a person's education. They warn against using art education as a means to achieve goals outside the discipline: "For instance, if an art education program is developed to achieve the goals of multicultural education and if it is taught to help students achieve greater self-realization, then the art education program is serving the disciplines of sociology and psychology" (p. 53). Appropriating the model adopted by Barkan, they believe that art education should be comprised of art history, aesthetics, art criticism and art production. As with Barkan, they emphasize that art students should emulate adult professionals in these four areas. This article would be particularly useful for educators seeking to follow this model; it is comprehensive in its

description of what benchmarks must be met for art history, aesthetics, art criticism, and art production.

Clark and Zimmerman (1983) present a clear overview of society-centered, subject-centered, and child-centered curriculums:

> In a society-centered curriculum, emphasis is upon meeting a community's social needs through learning social values and content derived from broad social problems; learning activities evolve as outcomes of group needs and interests. The major role of the teacher is as coordinator and mediator of learning, guiding students in their efforts to meet a community's social needs. (p. 79)

Conversely, a child-centered curriculum draws upon the expressed needs and interests of students. Self-expression and individual problem solving are of most concern. Child-centered curriculum content is very individualized; the teacher's purpose is to facilitate each student's expression of his/her individual needs and to orchestrate each student's development of his/her unique abilities in art. Lastly, in a subject-matter-centered curriculum, the teacher is there as "selector of content and instructor of knowledge, understandings, and skills" (Clark & Zimmerman, 1983, p. 79).

Clark continues two years later with a discussion of discipline-based curriculum design, focusing specially on its evolution in the wake of the Penn State Seminar, where Barkan had been one of the most influential figures. The seminar, with its call for art education as presented within structured and articulated curriculum, is of interest to Clark in this article. Consistent with Barkan's recommendations, Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) is described by Clark (1984) as a method that assumes that "the most important contribution that can be made by the visual arts to the education of the child is that which is indigenous to art" (p. 228). This article is a beneficial resource for an educator or researcher seeking clear, explicit examples of a DBAE curriculum as it would

function in school. Clark cites the Stanford-Kettering project, the SWRL elementary art program, and the Aesthetic Eye Project as productive curricular models.

Another art educator whose writings have contributed to my understanding of DBAE is Dwaine Greer, who expands upon the rationale that places art in general education and gives explanation of the four visual arts disciplines: aesthetics, criticism, art history, and production (1987). In this same article, he advocates for a written curriculum that is sequential and cumulative and expresses the need for art to be a required subject in all school districts. In DBAE, teacher accountability is vital.

In a 1984 article in *Studies in Art Education*, Greer writes about the process of training students through an explicit description of how his subject-centered conception of art education involves immersing the student in the process of thinking and acting as an artist does. This is one of the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10). Says Greer (1984):

> The idea of drawing or painting scenes from nature that present feelings about the natural environment, for example, is a major studio undertaking that has occupied generations of artists. Particular techniques to be acquired and ideas or perceptions of the world to serve as subject matter become vehicles for instruction…we can work backward, choosing appropriate adult examples to provide a sequence of instruction that leads to an understanding of depicting landscape similar to that of artists. (p. 214)

A LOWENFELDIAN FRAMEWORK

In the last edition (3rd) of *Creative and Mental Growth* (1957) published before his death in 1960, Lowenfeld embodies the heart and soul of child-centered education. Consistent with this theory, he values the process of making art above the tangible

product that children create. He espouses the importance of creative and intellectual growth and is concerned with making art a joyful and meaningful experience for both student and teacher. He believes firmly in the importance of this purpose for art education and aims to make the reader aware of artmaking as a vital component of child development.

Children are the essence of this book, and Lowenfeld is fascinated by their growth and changing experiences of the world as they develop. Their physical, mental, and creative growth are paramount. There is a vast philosophical difference between this source and the DBAE-related readings. Thus, a book such as *Creative and Mental Growth* is a useful contrast to the purposes espoused by individuals like Eisner and Greer.

Learning more about Lowenfeld helped me discern the degree to which *Eureka!* episodes supported his philosophy. Thus, when there seemed to be an emphasis on the artmaking process, and not the final product, I would note the evidence under one of the purposes that emphasized a more Lowenfeldian approach.

Youngblood (1982) is concerned with discussing Lowenfeld's child-centered philosophy with a critical analysis of the concept of adult interference. Lowenfeld was, of course, averse to too much adult guidance, which he believed could be detrimental to a child's growth and development. Youngblood (1982) questions the conventional interpretation of Lowenfeld's thoughts on interference, saying "Unfortunately, contemporary art educators have perseverated on Lowenfeld's 'don'ts' and neglected his more constructive recommendations" (p. 36).

Youngblood's suggestion that our contemporary interpretation of Lowenfeld might be inconsistent with his intentions is an important consideration for setting the parameters of the child-centered philosophy. This resource provided me with an

additional framework through which I could evaluate the teaching methods associated with Lowenfeld.

Similar to Youngblood, Saunders (1982) is concerned with clarifying Lowenfeld's methods in "The Lowenfeld Motivation," in which Saunders discusses the components of Lowenfeld's purposes and practices that he believes are sometimes misinterpreted. Saunders emphasizes that Lowenfeld's findings regarding the developmental stages should be used to usher students into the correct, age-appropriate level of learning. He explains that the hands-off approach that many teachers take is not consistent with Lowenfeld's intentions. Saunders directs teachers on how to properly utilize knowledge of developmental stages, saying:

> If the teacher finds a student in the gang age (Dawning Realism, age 9-11) who is still drawing on the schematic stage (achievement of a form concept—age 7-9), then he should be approached with drawing activities that begin with the schematic stage and guided to the next stage. (p. 29)

SOCIALLY BASED ART EDUCATION

In a 2004 article on postmodern principles, Olivia Gude questions the usefulness of the elements and principles of design, the widely used set of classroom tenets said to be based on the work of the early 20th century art educator, Arthur Wesley Dow (Walkup, 2001). Gude's beliefs, which become apparent through her criticisms of the "formalist Western conceptions" of art supported by the elements and principles of design, mirror those of many of her fellow postmodern thinkers (p. 7). Postmodern thought, she explains, embraces the local, specific needs of a community:

> It affirms the choice-making capacity of individuals who select from the past those things that will best serve them as starting points for today. These choices will be different in different places depending on the history and present issues of

> each school community. By structuring art projects to introduce students to relevant contemporary art and thus to postmodern principles—strategies for understanding and making art today—students will gain the skills to participate in and shape contemporary cultural conversations. (2004, p. 13)

For Gude, artmaking is a way for students to explore the problems present in their own cultural and political setting. Thus, says Gude, art educators should familiarize students with contemporary artworks that practice socially responsible critique. In this way, the educator empowers students to shape their modern world.

One of the arguments for socially based artmaking is that art reflecting community concerns can occupy a more indispensable space in our culture than art made for other purposes. In this way, art becomes a form of activism and a means to change lives. Art, says Anderson and Milbrandt (2005), can induce people to focus on "things that count" socially: "Art can be interactive, rising from and reflecting community concerns…through this interactive, communal focus on social issues people can come to see art as a vital, integral part of daily life" (p. 181). The key, then, is for students to recognize that they can address social issues through activism in art.

Gaudelius and Speirs present socially based art education as essential for demonstrating that art is never politically neutral, no matter what it looks like. Moreover, "using social and political content as a springboard for studio art does not preclude teaching craft and skillful composition" (2002, p. 222). It merely means that students are more likely to think of the classroom not as an isolated site, but as part of a local and global community.

When thinking in these terms, students are more likely to accept their own worlds as socially constructed and thus changeable. Teachers can start such conversations by showing the work of contemporary artists who practice socially responsible critique. They can also invite students to analyze visual culture for the messages it may carry:

"Teachers and students should begin to sort out written, broadcast, and visual representations of contemporary social realities and relate them to their own lived experience" (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 222). In starting these conversations, say the authors, teachers can "lay the groundwork for equitable race, ethnic, gender, and class relations in a democratic society" (p. 222).

Art educator Mary Wyrick writes that socially minded schools of thought often embrace the use of current news sources as a starting point for discussion in the classroom. Says Wyrick: "Many contemporary artists respond to systematic discrimination and social inequities by synthesizing news media into their work. News media are being appropriated, critiqued, and accessed by artists to include disenfranchised groups such as people with AIDS, women, and minorities" (as cited in Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 222). In this way, she says, students are taught to interact critically with new media by approaching it with informed opinions. The educative potential in alternative and contemporary artistic practices lies in its ability to help students both adapt to and influence their world.

In discussing issues that might be incorporated into an elementary school classroom, Wyrick lists points of controversy that her pre-service art education students found in newspapers and periodicals during an in-class assignment: multicultural education, race relations, social class relations, media violence, gun control, crime, capital punishment, and homelessness to name a few (2002, p. 222).

THE PERFORMATIVE ASPECT OF TEACHING

Values about the discipline of art are communicated through the performances of *Eureka!* host Franz Spohn. Whether or not he is successful in communicating that message to his audience depends not only on content and curriculum, but also on his

ability to engage his viewers through theatrical aspects of teaching. In *The Edutainer: Connecting the Art and Science of Teaching* (2010), education researchers contend that teaching is as much about entertaining and performance as it is about lesson content. They emphasize that one of the most important aspects of connecting with students is being aware of the factors that shape their world outside the classroom. Specifically, teachers are advised to become knowledgeable about their students' leisure time activities so that they can better understand that aspect of a student's world; and it is to a teacher's advantage to be able to mention sports, community activities and the like in their discussions (Johnson & McElroy, p. 18). In discussion of the non-verbal aspects of communication, Johnson and McElroy point to features like tone of voice: "Communication skills are most important when we talk about winning the hearts of our listeners. The tone, volume, rhythm and body language of the communicator play a vital role when speaking both directly and indirectly" (p. 120).

Farr (2010), writing on teaching as leadership, makes similar points about the importance of communication. The act of communication is described here as necessarily involving a positive and engaging tone of voice, the repetition of key ideas, the use of logical transition, and the use of visual aids. Says Farr (2010):

> Although it may at first seem like a relatively minor point, highly effective teachers emphasize that the ability to give clear, well-understood, and actionable directions saves hours and hours of instructional time that otherwise might be lost to false starts and reclarification. (p. 154)

Interestingly, Farr's findings indicate that strong communicators in the teaching realm have the same characteristics as strong communicators in any profession.

A book on effective teaching methods was an invaluable resource for me in my search to find additional information about ways in which educators could connect

subject material with students' outside interests (Hunt, Wiseman & Touzel, 2009). The authors observe that almost all content or subject matter has the potential to interest students if the teacher is skillful enough to find the connection to the students' interests (p. 117):

> To help ensure this, instruction should include a communication of the lesson's rationale which provides the teacher with an opportunity to stimulate the group's interest in the subject area…Far too often students are asked, or told, to proceed through learning activities without ever being informed of the value of the study to either their daily lives or their futures. (p. 117)

The authors have established a good understanding of the importance of this performative aspect which, of course, is relevant to *Eureka!*, giving credibility to their claim that "there needs to be a bit of Tom Sawyer in all teachers" (p. 118).

MEDIA STUDIES

In conducting my preliminary research, I identified the need for some background information on the methods used by researchers who have analyzed television programming. One writer who has done so is Malcom Gladwell, author of *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (2002). In a chapter on *Sesame Street*, Gladwell relays how researchers at Harvard measured the eye movements of 21 four and five-year olds whose gazes were fixated on a television screen while *Sesame Street* played. Gladwell's analysis of what the results communicated about the television program—namely, that the children watching *Sesame Street* were more likely to watch Oscar the Grouch than to look at the learning content when such content was situated at the bottom of the screen—serves as a good model for how a researcher can incorporate such findings into his or her writing.

Selznick's *Global Television: Co-producing Culture* (2008) gives a broad picture of what was occurring within the television industry in the 1990s. One of the most interesting aspects emerging at the time was the growth and segmentation of children as consumers. In addition, she says,

> Increased costs and specific content requirements put additional pressure on program producers at a time when the television industry was already experiencing significant shifts. After all, these changes were taking place within the larger framework of the television industry in which conglomeration and globalization dominated. (p. 114)

Selznick's book gives voice to the 1990s phenomenon of demand for television shows to be tailored to international markets. As a result, 1990s television shows came to be purposefully unspecific—places were not easily identifiable; characters were not culturally obvious (p. 117). In this way, *Eureka!* is set apart from other '90s children's television programming in that it did not aim to be marketed globally and was therefore useful for teaching cultural values specific to the United States. Selznick's book offers additional information about the industry during this time period, some of which addresses the conflict between cultural ideals and mass commercialism:

> There are tensions of course between the ideological goals of contemporary capitalist democracy and the financial prospects of children's television. Rugged individualism, for example, is not profitable for children's television. Individualism may be a 'pro-social' trait, but it does not create an extensive set of action figures or stuffed animals that children can purchase. (p. 120)

This source brings up important moral questions that should be at the forefront of how we think about children's television programming. Says Selznick, "We must question, however, whether this really does offer children rights and responsibilities as citizens" (p. 121). Does this narrow type of recognition afford children status as

worthwhile participants in society, she asks? "Or does it limit their possible roles within society as they are placed into categories based on their habits of consumption? Does their value become prescribed and their identities limited by their ability to support a brand?" (Selznick, 2008, p. 121). Her assertion—that television has the opportunity to represent people of both genders and of diverse races and to tell children that alternative identities and practices are welcomed—can serve as a guide both for evaluating the success of *Eureka!* and for scaffolding new models of educational programming.

David Buckingham's 2007 evaluation of educational technology describes a prediction for the increased growth of this industry. Speaking about attendance at the British Education, Training, and Technology Show—reputed to be the largest educational trade fair in the world—he says:

> As the number of teachers leaving the profession has grown, and as employment in the media industries has been increasingly casualized, educational technology has become an attractive opportunity for potential entrepreneurs; and the growth in the number of 'consultants' and other industry personnel attending the BETT Show might be taken as one indication of this. (p. 9)

Buckingham believes that such a showing is a strong indication of the steady growth in the number of technology companies making inroads in the educational marketplace. He strives to provide ample proof that the increase of technology in schools has opened them up to the influence of business, but he also writes about disadvantages inherent to learning within online forums, particularly since the rampant practice of gathering market research information on young people as they submit personal information online. "The Internet is now essentially an unregulated commercial medium; while this does not in itself automatically undermine its educational value, it does mean that it can no longer be seen merely as a neutral conduit for 'information,'" says

Buckingham (2007, p. 11). He further discusses the social implications of the use of educational technology and the plausibility of using educational media to incite social change. As with Selznick's discussion of the commercialization of children's programming, his analysis of this medium wherein students are seen as a captive audience offers a valuable glimpse into the more fruitful possibilities of not-for-profit educational programming.

To expand upon this, Kozma describes how media can be effective as a means of supplementing instruction in his 1991 article, "Learning with Media." He also looks at the mental representations and cognitive functions that can result from the practice of supplementing instruction with educational programming. Media characteristics are analyzed in terms of their effect on mental models (i.e., he examines the use of media besides television), and there is discussion of the teaching methods that can be combined with television programming. There are some particularly fascinating ideas here, such as the revelation that cues spurring the onset of visual attention are women and children's voices, laughter, peculiar voices, sounds effects, auditory changes, and visual movement (p. 189). The research also shows that the perceptions students have before viewing the medium are important—specifically, whether they are told to watch it for entertainment or educational purposes.

Kozma's findings were useful as a means of supporting the implicit assumption of my topic; namely, that art educational programming is worth researching for its potential use in schools. It was also a valuable resource to aid in critiquing the show.

VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES

Television, along with other channels of mass media, is often included in discussions of visual culture. Freedman, writing in 1994, urges us to define art education

broadly to include the various forms of visual culture. In turn, she says, this study of everyday information meant for mass consumption will bring greater awareness of our deeply ingrained stereotypes about gender: "In part, fine art is linked to advertising, television programming, commercial films, etc. through representations of gender. Attention to gender representations across forms of visual culture in curriculum could illustrate the ways that visual messages and meaning are created" (p. 167). Freedman encourages the use of television in art education because it is a medium that will reach students. By critiquing television shows that they see every day as part of a visual culture curriculum, students can, in time, become more fully aware of gender differences that exist not only in media culture—but also in family, local, and peer culture circles (p. 167). Says Freedman: "Doing pictorial commentary on visual culture is similar in quality to telling a story. By responding visually to works of fine art, advertisements, or popular films, students can represent relationships of visual culture that may not be verbalized as effectively" (p. 167).

Later, in a 2000 article about the practice of teaching visual culture in a democracy, Freedman asserts that art needs to be discussed in terms of sociocultural context. In the past, she says, educators focused on teaching classical, canonical works of art. Freedman seeks to change this practice, saying that educators ought to be teaching art that is relevant for the future: "Visual culture is expanding, as is the realm of the visual arts. This realm includes fine art, television, film and video, computer technology, fashion photography, advertising and so on" (p. 315). Freedman's beliefs about the seductive power of the television as a teaching medium reinforced my interest and belief in the potential of television programming:

As Freedman asserts, television has become our national curriculum. More students watch a nationally broadcast television program than are taught through the

same curriculum text. Highly seductive and widely distributed images with sophisticated aesthetics intricately tied to sociopolitical meanings are now seen every day by students. As a result of telecommunication, students learn from and about the visual arts through a virtual curriculum. (p. 325)

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined the different philosophies of art education that have been put forth by various scholars of the discipline throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Embedded within the doctrine of each school of art educational philosophy are a set of justifications for why art should be taught in schools and other sites. With this in mind, I have summarized the beliefs and practices of each such school of thought. In this way, I have intended to give the reader a brief review of the various purposes that have been espoused in relation to the existence of art education.

I have also discussed the performative aspects of teaching—that is, communication methods that make use of entertainment techniques to deliver information to students. Further, since the medium through which *Eureka!* is communicated is television, I reviewed literature from the discipline of Media Studies. Finally, I examined sources that fall under the heading of visual culture, a discipline that analyzes the plethora of modern, everyday objects and media that surround us, such as television.

In the next chapter, I detail my methods for locating the tapes that contained episodes of *Eureka!* and subsequently viewing the episodes. I also discuss how information in the eight episodes is interpreted—how I made sense of the tone and content of the program to glean the purposes of art education that were contained within. In addition, I list the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) in

full, helping to establish an interpretive structure for my analysis of the eight episodes of the art education television series *Eureka!*.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

This research started, as much early research does, with several rounds of trial-and-error to find an appropriate set of search terms. After testing a wide range of combinations, I found that the phrase "art educational television programming," when entered into a thesis/dissertation database, would yield the most useful results. One entry, in particular, stood out: the 1998 dissertation of Dr. Gordon Joseph Murray, who had written about *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*, a television show he had produced with partner Franz Spohn (who is also the series host) in 1995. The program aired on several Ohio PBS stations in 1995 and 1996. After its stint on air, the series was put on tape and distributed directly to subscribing school districts up until 2010 (G.J. Murray, personal communication, July 11, 2011). In his post-production research of *Eureka!*, Murray sought to answer three main questions. First, he aimed to measure the effectiveness of the program as an instructional tool in the elementary school classroom. Second, he asked whether an art teacher's level of experience affected the quality of student art produced in his or her classroom. Third, he asked if an art teacher's level of experience, if it were high, would increase the rate of success of *Eureka!* as an instructional tool when implemented in the classroom.

Once I had made the decision to focus on *Eureka!*, I had to gain access to the material around which Murray's research was centered. This consisted of eight tapes—one tape for each 15-minute episode in the first season—and a 56-page teacher's resource guide. To that end, I searched online databases of PBS archives to try and locate copies of the show. When this effort bore no results, I contacted Kent State University Teleproductions. No one there knew of *Eureka!*, presumably because 15 years had passed

since the show was produced. Contact information contained in the dissertation itself was outdated; phone numbers had changed, and the persons listed were seemingly no longer employed there. An inter-library loan request proved fruitless as well, since university resources could not locate the tapes or any material related to the show. Feeling discouraged, I finally decided to seek out Murray directly. This brought an end to my search—I contacted and was delighted to hear back from Murray, who seemed equally enthused that someone would want to revisit his research. He referred me to Jady Wade, a teacher with whom he had worked closely and who was in possession of the master copies of both the tapes and the accompanying teacher's guide booklets.

TRANSLATING FORMATS

By November, Wade had mailed the tapes—but I was far from being able to view them. As it turned out, the eight episodes were in Beta SP format, housed on oversized tapes from the 1990s that the university art department's library could not accommodate in transferring them to an accessible format. The department lacked the technology needed in order for me to view the tapes, and it was unequipped to facilitate conversion to a more contemporary format.

Collaboration with another university department led me to the equipment I needed, and I was able to view episodes of *Eureka!* for the first time. As I made my way through viewing the first season, I was immensely relieved to discover that *Eureka!* met my standards for high-quality art educational television programming: art lessons based on broad ideas; a wide breadth of media with which children could experiment, and a charismatic host who facilitated both artistic and intellectual discovery in the show's young participants. If the show had lacked those aspects, I undoubtedly would have had trouble using it as the focus of my research and writing. As I watched, I took detailed

notes by hand on each episode's content, the particulars of which will be discussed within the next section.

At this point, I assumed the technology-related challenges were over. After all, I knew that the university art department's library had the equipment to transfer material from mini-DV tape (the intermediary format I used after the archaic Beta SP) to DVD. When I put the first mini-DV tape into the appropriate deck in the fine arts library, however, I found the image on the screen fuzzy and the audio choppy and inconsistent. It was at this point that I finally conceded that this process would be best done by a professional. The university's communications school led me to a local, well-reputed Austin media company, who then transferred all eight episodes to DVD. Armed with all the programming in readily accessible DVD format, I was finally ready to begin my analysis in earnest.

GROUPING THE PURPOSES

As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, it is my unwavering belief that we as art educators need our own clear, well-informed reasons for devoting our careers to the practice of teaching art. By discovering our most strongly held beliefs and reasons for teaching art—reasons that will always vary from educator to educator—we can effectively communicate consistent messages to our students through careful curriculum design and classroom instruction. I believe that the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) represent the most comprehensive documentation of various justifications for teaching art. Ultimately, I decided to use Bolin's list as a resource against which I could measure the justifications for art education as communicated within the first season of *Eureka!*.

In an attempt to make this analytical process more manageable, I grouped Bolin's 45 purposes into nine overarching categories. Grouping in this way was most practical for me—not only to distill the 45 justifications into fewer, more general categories that were easier to conceptualize, but also to discern the main ideas within *Eureka!* by looking for larger themes across the episodes.

The list of 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) is presented below. The purposes are listed in the order that they appeared as presented by Bolin in 2008. I have, however, made an amendment to the original: I have numbered them 1 through 45. I have made this small change to Bolin's list (which listed the purposes out with bullet points, and no capitalization) in order to make it easier to quickly distinguish one purpose from another in future chapters. The list is as follows:

1. Build a sense of appreciation and "good taste"
2. Increase vocational possibilities
3. Encourage independent thinking
4. Discover and develop artistic talent
5. Cultivate and express a sense of beauty
6. Promote skills in observation
7. Train the hand, mind, and eye
8. Assist students in their other school subjects
9. Provide a break from other school subjects
10. Engage in a form of play
11. Develop democratic behavior in citizens
12. Provide an outlet for self-expression
13. Learn elements and principles of design

14. Promote neatness, dexterity, and precision
15. Generate an appreciation for nature
16. Generate an appreciation for the built environment
17. Enhance social and emotional growth
18. Provide a universal language, spoken by all people
19. Build moral citizens
20. Strengthen national security
21. Promote and discover beauty
22. Initiate and expand opportunities to use art materials
23. Understand art processes— think and work like an artist
24. Encourage spontaneity and originality
25. Provide a concrete outlet for imagination
26. Further students' character development
27. Build skills in problem solving
28. Investigate and study everyday objects
29. Have aesthetic experiences
30. Learn a vocabulary of expression
31. Cultivate aesthetic judgment
32. Provide a therapeutic outlet
33. Express creative thinking
34. Make intelligent choices with regard to home furnishings, apparel, constructed landscapes, and other areas of daily life
35. Instill cultural values
36. Instill multicultural values
37. Promote leisure time enjoyment

38. Develop respect for one's own effort and the effort of others
39. Develop visual perception
40. Develop visual literacy
41. Learn about art and artists from the past
42. Increase ability to discuss works of art
43. Become knowledgeable consumers
44. Learn about the surrounding visual culture
45. Learn about the surrounding material culture

To help make working with this extensive list more manageable, I simplified it by placing each purpose into one of eight groups. These eight groups, which I identified, are labeled A through H. Below, I have detailed the concepts that characterize and delineate each of these eight groups.

- In Group A are purposes that frame art education and artmaking as a means of training the aesthetic sensibilities in order to widen the breadth of human experience. For example, the purposes "cultivate and express a sense of beauty" and "have aesthetic experiences" fit into this group. Also in Group A are purposes surrounding the importance of cultivating an individual's unique voice through self-expression, such as "encourage spontaneity/originality" and "provide a concrete outlet for the imagination." Lastly, it was within Group A that I placed the purpose of art to foster a student's ability to solve problems ("build skills in problem solving").
- Within Group B and Group C are the purposes aligned with the idea of producing classically trained art students able to think and act like artists. Of all the groups, Groups B and C adhere most closely to the ideas of Discipline-Based Art Education. Some of the purposes within this group deal directly with building art

appreciation; for instance, “increase ability to discuss works of art” and “learn about art and artists from the past.” Others are more directly tied in with the practices of a working artist, such as “initiate and expand opportunity to use art materials” and “promote skills in observation.”

- Groups D and E house purposes that treat artmaking as an activity to enhance leisure time and relaxation and art education as a means of raising awareness of consumer culture, respectively. In Group D are the purposes that implicate art education in play time and leisure; for instance, “provide a break from other school subjects.” Group E’s purposes include those often cited when discussing the need to study material culture in art education: “become knowledgeable consumers” and “encourage independent thinking.” This last purpose, although it may seem more appropriate to a group that is characterized by an emphasis on creativity and self-expression, has been put into this group because much of the literature on material culture studies focuses on the effectiveness of such studies in promoting independent thinking. Dissecting items of material culture can, for instance, help students distance themselves from the pernicious influence of ads that seek to take advantage of the specific vulnerabilities of adolescent consumers. Therefore, I have included “encourage independent thinking” within this group.
- The next group, containing Groups F, G and H, includes justifications for art education that promote the discipline as a means to increase a student’s chance of succeeding in school overall and in the wider culture. Such purposes posit art as a means to an end; artmaking is seen as a method of fostering developmental and interactive capacities within the child. An educator who espouses such purposes would therefore measure the success of, say, an art curriculum in schools on the basis of whether the child has gained life skills. I have included one such purpose,

"increase vocational possibilities," within this group under the assumption that this purpose refers to vocations besides that of becoming an artist. Instead, I assume that this stated purpose refers to developing in children the cognitive, interactive, and organizational skills that increase a child's likelihood to succeed in future employment. Also included within this group are the unlikely purposes that support the idea of artmaking as a nationalistic endeavor, such as "develop democratic behavior in citizens" and "build moral citizens." Lastly, artmaking is put forward within this group as a means to increase cross-cultural understanding, art to "provide a universal language, spoken by all people," for example, as well as "instill multicultural values."[2]

WATCHING THE TAPES

Having the tapes professionally transferred to DVD format was worth the cost in that it enabled me to view the series on my own computer at any time. The first time I watched each episode, I listened carefully to Spohn, the host, in order to determine the nature of his *spoken* statements. For example, in Episode 2, entitled "Art Again," Spohn states that children's museums are so much fun that you can "sometimes forget it's a museum." Since that comment carries implications about the purpose of art education (suggesting that art education is a means to be playful and have fun), I recorded that quote under the purpose within Group E that reads "engage in a form of play," along with an abbreviation to note the episode in which it had appeared. In this way, I systematically analyzed each of the eight episodes for spoken statements that could serve as support for a specific purpose.

[2] Please see the Appendix for an example of my method of note-taking under the various groups.

The second time I viewed each episode, I watched for clues that *implied*, rather than explicitly stated, purposes. This time around, I made notes according to factors such as choice of activity, an "art-a-fact" that appeared on-screen with an interesting fact or piece of trivia, or the person/artist with whom Spohn had chosen to converse in a particular episode. As an example, Spohn spends part of Episode 7 in conversation with two toy designers. In this segment of the episode, Spohn devotes air time to questioning the designers about how they entered that particular field. He asks them about their training, and inquires about how often they use sketches and drawings as a means of developing ideas. I saw this as an indication that Spohn views art education partially as a means of exploring what career opportunities might be available for artistically inclined students. So, using my notation, I recorded evidence for art education as a means to "increase vocational possibilities," which was housed within Group F.

As a third and final measure, I went through the 56-page teacher's handbook to record any purposes that might be contained within this document. Each episode of *Eureka!* was accompanied by a written summary of the 15-minute televised lesson, suggestions for activities that could complement the episode, and episode theme-related worksheets meant to reinforce episode topics for students. I also obtained clues from the manual's directions to teachers; for instance, when a section devoted to Episode 6 advises teachers to take their students to a sculpture exhibit. I grouped this statement within Group F under the purpose "instill cultural values." I also classified this piece of evidence under a second purpose, however—under Group B's "learn about art and artists from the past." This decision to group a statement under more than one heading was repeated several times during my data-gathering process. I did this in order to capture as many as possible of the nuanced meanings of spoken, implied, or written statements made in connection with an episode of *Eureka!*.

Most often, the "evidence" I found to support a specific purpose came in the form of a quote recorded directly from an episode or the *Teacher's Guide*. However, other clues about the reasons for artmaking were sometimes contained in more subtle measures—for instance, what *kind* of art was shown in an episode, or the general tone of voice and the diction used by Spohn. When I experienced ambivalence over where to classify a certain statement or action, I often posed questions to myself as if I were an adolescent viewing the program. Questions like: "What kind of message is Spohn sending me? Does he look/sound/seem as if he wants me to get something specific out of this lesson? Or is this presented as artmaking for simple fun and pleasure? Does he want me to learn something—and, if so, what is that something?"

Through qualitative case study research, I explored the type of operational messages conveyed throughout the series. I also sought to identify the method of delivery for this operational message—via actions, comments or choices—in an attempt to gain a closer understanding of how our artmaking lessons may be received by a student audience.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH AND PERSONAL BIAS

My aim in conducting this research on *Eureka!* was to attempt to position myself within the shoes of a typical adolescent viewing the series. In order to determine what messages were being communicated about the purpose for art education, I had to try and abandon my own notions of why artmaking is a worthwhile activity for students. I endeavored to interpret each episode as a neutral viewer.

Since my research involved analyzing an existing, real-life situation in all its complexity, case study methodology was most appropriate for analysis of the data. As described by Kyburz-Graber (2004), case study methodology is unique in that it does not

rely on a controlled, artificial environment. Rather, it follows the research philosophy of exploring a situation "as close to the people concerned as possible, describing the situation in as much detail as possible, and finally explaining the findings in a clear and comprehensible way" (p. 54). My objective was to construe the programming as an adolescent would have, and, therefore, I constructed meaning according to the context within which the program's cues were situated. As Kyburz-Graber (2004) says, in case study methodology, "The aim is to understand the meaning behind the actions and knowledge of the participants" (p. 54). In this case, the participants were the creators of *Eureka!* who made decisions about the content of each episode and the accompanying teacher's guide. As I detailed in the next three chapters, I targeted the host as a main participant as well; his dialogue and actions were paramount in arriving at my conclusions about the program's messages. In order to remain as objective as possible, I recorded each of his on-air statements in my notes, even when the dialogue was repetitive. When, for instance, Spohn would make the same type of purpose-related statement twice, I would record it in my notes twice. In this way, I attempted to avoid the possible subjective bias of assigning more meaning to one statement than to another; my findings were a simple matter of quantity of one type of spoken or written statement versus another.

Developing strategies of avoiding bias is important for any researcher. But this task may be said to take on even more significance in conducting case study research, which has been criticized within the scientific community for a perceived lack of rigor in its methodology. In writing about the arguments levied against case study as a research method, Flyvbjerg (2006) explains: "The fourth of the five misunderstandings about case-study research is that the method maintains a bias toward verification, understood as a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions, so that the study therefore

becomes of doubtful scientific value" (p. 234). Experiments have shown, however, that it is falsification, not verification, of one's preconceived notions that is most prevalent in case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 234). In my research, I aimed to come to conclusions about the "how" and "why" of *Eureka!*; this study followed the model of a researcher looking to gain knowledge in the workings of an existing phenomenon. Therefore, if another individual were to duplicate my research on *Eureka!* and come to different conclusions, it would not nullify the value of this study. It would simply add to the body of knowledge we have about how different individuals perceive the same art education lesson. It would provide additional depth and improve our capacity to understand the messages we send to student audiences, both with our actions and our selection of curricular material.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have described the process of procuring the tapes and converting them to a usable format. Next, I discuss the ways I interpreted the messages of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*. Specifically, I detail how I categorized information from the eight episodes under the appropriate purpose from the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10).

As I mentioned early in this chapter, I grouped the 45 purposes into larger schools of art educational theory. Then, when a comment from *Eureka!*'s host, a lesson that was included in the teacher's manual, or another such signal communicated information about the program's values, I recorded the quote (or relevant information) under the appropriate purpose. In this chapter, I have explained, in detail, my decisions and process regarding these groups (i.e., categories of art educational theory).

In the next chapter, I examine the program itself. I give description of the show's host, convey information about the program's tone and camera shots; and recount every episode from start to finish. This is accomplished so the reader gains a more rich and complete understanding of the "look and feel" of *Eureka!*.

CHAPTER 4

Descriptive Program Analysis of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*

PROGRAM HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

Each of the eight episodes in the first season of *Eureka! The Creative Art Series* represent a different opportunity for us to understand this unique educational series and to perceive the messages that it delivers to its young viewers. The form in which this material exists affords educators the chance to conduct critical analyses of what is perceived to be the successful or unsuccessful aspects of the host's performance. Since this so-called "performance" was recorded, it offers researchers the chance to view it as many times as needed—and, in turn, analyze the art educational teaching philosophy that is presented by the charismatic host and dynamic program content.

In Part I of this chapter, I outline the general elements of the series and give the reader a description of the host, Franz Spohn. My aim is to introduce the reader to the show's general format, tone, and compositional elements.

In Part II, I summarize the content of each of the eight episodes in the first season of *Eureka!* to ensure that the reader is familiar with the educational content of this program. My recounting of each episode is followed by a summary of the corresponding two-page section of the teacher's guide. I also offer information regarding the activity sheets that are provided in the back of the teacher's guide, which are designed for teachers to hand out to the class after students have had the opportunity to see and discuss the episode.

PART I: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERIES

Program host Franz Spohn is a tall, thin man who looks to be in his late thirties or early forties. He has short dark hair, glasses, a slightly hawkish face, and a broad

moustache. He has an energetic, playful demeanor and a comfortable ease of communicating in front of a student audience. His interest in producing and studying art and his natural curiosity for the world becomes increasingly evident throughout the series; his enthusiasm in presenting episode content strongly suggests the fact that he had a part in selecting that episode's lesson, whatever it happens to be. He often begins or ends an episode in costume, as in Episode 1, when he shows up wearing a pair of lederhosen.

Perhaps most striking is Spohn's affinity for the children with whom he works. He always seems to be having fun and enjoying the opportunity to teach children about a subject for which he has boundless enthusiasm. The art he creates during demonstrations is almost universally geared toward his young adolescent audience (ages 9 through 12); many of his drawings, for example, are of cartoon characters of his own creation. He is also mindful of short attention spans during these demonstrations, so he is careful to work fast, sometimes sacrificing exactitude in favor of retaining the interest of his audience. He shows a zeal for the whole spectrum of media through his demeanor and conversation. It is very apparent that he has a wide range of appreciation for different types of craft, some of which—like papermaking—would perhaps not be traditionally included in a studio curriculum.

In some of the episodes, Spohn spends time with a guest artist or other professional who demonstrates his or her way of working. In others, Spohn himself is the only artist giving demonstrations. Regardless of the subject matter of the episode, he always concludes it with a segment in which young viewers are given ideas or suggestions for how they might use the concepts or techniques taught to create their own art.

Each episode begins with a brief (less than one minute) segment in which Spohn introduces the topic of the show, often accenting this short window of time with a provocative question about the topic, a funny costume, or a playful vignette. For instance, Episode 4 begins with a silly, half-animated scene of Spohn counting sheep in his (snore-ridden) sleep. After this short introduction, the show's theme music begins to play.

The theme music portion of the series is a notable component in itself. At the beginning of each episode, the instrumental theme music is accompanied by a series of illustrated images of Spohn dressed up as various "characters." One illustrated characterization shows him as a deep-sea diver, another shows him dressed up in ruffled neck-scarf and powdered wig, and another characterizes him as a Viking with a horned helmet and blonde braids.

When speaking, Spohn faces the camera directly. Indeed, he often pauses from demonstrations or activities to ask the viewer a question or make a dramatic statement. In each episode, regular programming is accented by the occasional "art-a-fact," a fact or piece of trivia that flashes up on the screen. The art-a-fact, which is narrated in a child's voice as the words show up on the screen in front of a whimsical backdrop, always relates to the topic being presented by the episode wherein it is placed. In Episode 2, for instance, the art-a-fact reads, "If you are average, by the time you are in the 6^{th} grade, you will have produced more than 11 tons of trash." This relates to the episode's theme of converting discarded objects—objects that we may at first see only as trash—into a sculptural piece of art.

The segment of the written teacher's guide that accompanies each episode follows a consistent formula. First, the guide gives a summary of what was taught and recounts any demonstrations or activities that occurred. Second, it gives teachers a list of preparatory measures in a section entitled, "Before the Program." Next, it synthesizes the

overall takeaway that students can obtain from the episode, and how that lesson will (hopefully) enrich their skill set.

The second page of the individual episode's designated section of the teacher's guide lists related keywords and a set of instructions for what teachers can do after the program is concluded to facilitate further learning among students. In the last section, entitled "Now Try These," there is a list of action items that build upon the topic to send students further into the realm of related discovery.

PART II: EPISODE SUMMARIES

Eureka! The Creative Arts Series is comprised of eight 15-minute episodes. Each episode introduces a new artistic medium or technique. As a supplement to the series, the 56-page teacher's guide contains two adjacent pages of material to accompany each episode. The teacher's guide, along with the activity sheets provided in the back of the teacher's guide, serve to reinforce episode themes and concepts. Additionally, these materials suggest projects or activities as follow-up to each episode.

To orient the reader to the sorts of themes, concepts, and activities that *Eureka!* utilizes, each episode is summarized below. Since Chapter 5 is devoted to a somewhat lengthy analysis of the values and implicit messages found in *Eureka!*, the discussion here provides a more surface-level description of each episode.

Episode 1: "What a Relief!"

Eureka! kicks off the series with its first episode, "What a Relief!." This title is a play on words about the episode's activity, relief printing. Costumed in lederhosen and riding a bicycle-like contraption that he calls the "artcycle," Spohn leads students to the playground to make relief prints. Calling attention to both surfaces found in nature and those from the built outdoor environment, Spohn encourages students to look for a

surface texture they find interesting. During a demonstration, the host creates a low relief print by rolling ink over a series of bumps and cracks in a ring-like shape that he finds on the pavement of the playground. He presses a piece of paper to the pavement to create a print from the ink applied to the ground, enlisting students help him smooth the back-side of the paper with a brayer.

He then takes the audience back to his studio to show his viewers how to create a print from a piece of styrofoam into which he has inscribed a design. He follows up with a trip back to the playground to see some of the prints the students have created with the surfaces available on and around the playground. One student pair shows him a relief print they have created from the surface of a set of metal stairs adjacent to the building. Spohn praises the print for a happy accident that occurred during the printing process – the pitted surface of the metal has created a slightly uneven, speckled motif around the edges of where the paint transferred to the paper. When Spohn asks students about the work they have created, his questions encourage them to identify why they chose the surfaces they did, and what effect they were trying to achieve by doing so.

The follow-up in the teacher's manual reinforces the concepts of printmaking as an alternative way of documenting surfaces and textures – instead of, say, taking a photograph. Both the manual and the filmed portion seem geared toward students with limited background in printmaking. As part of this lesson, says the manual, "awareness of printmaking as an art form is established" (p. 3). In the activity sheets supplied, students are directed to identify what the printed version of a surface would look like by matching one image with its printed counterpart. Cognitively, the activities encourage growth by guiding students to think about how an image looks in reverse, as it is when created from a print. As Spohn did within the episode, the teacher's guide mentions the phenomenon of the happy accident in printmaking. It also encourages exploration by suggesting that

teachers take their students on a “texture expedition” (p. 3), so as to make discoveries about their school in new ways and find the surfaces that might yield interesting prints.

Episode 2: “Art Again (Recyclables)”

In “Art Again,” Spohn opens the episode with a bit of information about how artists have to work hard to express a thought or feeling. “But,” he reassures his audience, “real artists know secrets to make even hard work fun.” Spohn's thought serves as the introduction to a visit to a Chicago museum, where we are introduced to Leo Sewell, an artist who constructs magnificent sculptures out of discarded objects. Sewell tells Spohn about his life-long fascination with making use of the “junk” that others have discarded—broken toys, kitchen silverware, old identification cards, to name a few of the objects he uses—to create art that gives those objects a new life. Of the sculptures that Sewell shows Spohn, nearly all are modeled to resemble an animal: a dinosaur, a duck, etc.

Spohn takes the viewers to his studio to experiment with Sewell's technique of assembling everyday objects into a recognizable form. Choosing a small plastic funnel, a whiffle ball, a clothespin, some plastic forks, and various other objects from his pile of odds and ends, Spohn assembles a “see creature,” nicknamed as such because he had to *see* the magic and opportunity in the pile of junk before him. “Junk is still junk unless you decide to look at it with an artist’s eye,” says Spohn in the closing moments of the episode.

Like the televised portion, the teacher’s guide emphasizes artist perspective and conceptualization skills. The post-program directions suggest that teachers have their students bring a box of junk to class that they can assemble into a sculpture using glue, string, and fasteners. The activity sheets demonstrate that an object can look entirely different when viewed from a different angle or another side, thus reinforcing the idea of

multiple meanings and interpretations, depending on the perspective of the viewer. The activity sheets also encourage problem-solving, directing students to pick from an illustrated collection of kitchen tools and foods to dream up a sculpture, which they are then told to sketch on a separate piece of paper.

Episode 3: "Oh! My Papyrus"

The third episode in the series, like the second, presents an everyday object – this time, the object is paper—in a new way. In the opening scene, Spohn mentions that although many people may take paper for granted, artist Jim Pernotto (featured in this episode) treats papermaking as an art form. Pernotto brings us into his studio and demonstrates the uses of his machinery, which is capable of converting a pulpy wet mass of cotton fiber into smooth sheets of paper. Together, he and Spohn experiment with incorporating many unexpected flat objects into the paper by pressing them into the surface while the pulp is still wet. They reveal that torn pieces from a magazine, small feathers, and even insects can be incorporated into the surface of the paper. True to the theme, the episode's first art-a-facts are about paper. The first fact is about fashion designers in the 1960s who created disposable suits and dresses made of paper similar to handi-wipes; the second fact pertains to watermarks on paper.

Spohn goes back to his studio and brainstorms about the different possible uses of paper, eventually deciding that he will make use of paper's ability to be three-dimensional by constructing a pop-up book. He draws an elephant and dog for the first pop-up card. For his second pop-up scene, he constructs and draws an elaborately colored jungle scene.

Similarly, the teacher's guide accompaniment to the episode treats papermaking as an art form. Teachers are encouraged to use papermaking kits to make paper with their

students—and to lead the students in experimenting with embedding pieces of newspaper, leaves, and flowers into the pulp. Teachers are also reminded that paper pulp does not always have to be laid out flat to dry in a sheet; it can be shaped by a mold into a three-dimensional shape. The activity sheets follow Spohn's lead with pop-up cards, supplying templates from which to make simple pop-up models.

Episode 4: "First Impressions"

Unlike the previous episodes, "First Impressions" does not begin by spotlighting an individual artist. Instead, it opens with a scene of Spohn in his studio as he delves directly into the particulars of silk-screen printmaking. He shows his viewers how a blob of colored ink poured onto the screen will bleed on to the paper below, then demonstrates how a stencil made from wax paper can be taped to the screen to create a more purposeful shape. Next, the host shows how he can draw directly onto the screen with a wax crayon; in the following step, the colored ink he applies to the screen with a squeegee softens and partially dissolves the wax so that Spohn's crayon drawing transfers to the paper underneath the screen. He also makes use of a technique in which a special "masking" liquid, which acts as a barrier, is applied to parts of the screen through which ink is not meant to flow.

The episode's art-a-facts pertain to printmaking. In the first fact, viewers learn that artist Ed Ruscha once constructed a life-sized room made entirely of paper silk-screened with milk chocolate. The second art-a-fact informs us that when artists create fine art prints, they usually sign them in pencil, differentiating the signature from the print itself. In closing, Spohn gives viewers suggestions for improvised printmaking equipment for use at-home or in classrooms without printmaking kits.

The teacher's manual suggests that teachers have students sketch images they would like to screen-print, experimenting with different images on scratch-paper until they find one they want to print on paper or a t-shirt. The activity sheet is a very user-friendly guide for students seeking to make stencils; the directions for making a simple paper or cardboard stencil are literally drawn out for the student to easily follow. As with the other activity sheets, the tone is friendly and encouraging of free, uninhibited experimentation with "discovery" as the primary goal. The sheet gives an outlined suggestion of a drawing to cut out for a print, but reminds students that they may use a shape of their own, if they choose to do so. The second activity sheet offers practical tips and instruction, warning students, for instance, that a cut-out shape with parts that are too pointy or thin is likely to rip when the squeegee is pulled over it.

Episode 5: "Temple of the Muse"

Eureka! goes on a short series of field trips in Episode 5, taking viewers to a variety of museum settings so that students can become familiar with the range of characteristics that differentiate an art museum from, say, a science museum.

The episode opens with rapid-fire flash of camera shots of a vast variety of different types of art, from painting to collage to sculpture. Spohn calls our attention to differences between varying types of museums. He points out that some museums encourage play and conversation, whereas others cultivate an air of silent reverence. As Spohn reminds us, the art we see at such public places can influence the art that we create by making us think or feel something; and his tone conveys his enthusiasm when introducing students to the wonders of a museum environment. His primary focus, however, is not the objects themselves. Instead, episode content is based on showing the viewer that many roles and responsibilities exist within a museum setting: curator, exhibit

designer, conservator, and the like. In giving students clues on how an exhibit is put together, Spohn lifts back the proverbial curtain for us, thus dispelling common notions of museums as mysterious, stuffy, or erudite.

In accordance with the theme, Spohn's demonstration focuses on making choices about how an artist's work will be displayed—only, the "museum" is a small cardboard model of a gallery space, and the "art" is pieces of candy and candy wrappers. Spohn instructs that he must make aesthetic decisions about what the gallery walls and partitions should look like, according to how they can best display the candy (i.e., the "art") that is to be shown. As he constructs his model gallery, Spohn talks about how much he likes candy and how he enjoys putting it all together in the model space.

The teacher's manual and activity sheets focus on students becoming familiar with the roles of curators, conservators, and exhibit designers. Students are encouraged to situate themselves in the shoes of the museum staff who puts on an exhibit, and therefore must make decisions about how art objects are shown within the gallery space. On the activity sheets, students are given options of different drawn picture frames with which to display various paintings, and are then directed to look at a series of drawings of art objects and decide (presumably within a class discussion) how to exhibit them. Students must then give a brief written description of the duties performed by the various staff within the museum.

Episode 6: "The 3 D's"

Spohn opens the sixth episode in the *Eureka!* series with another ride on the artcycle. However, this time he cruises around an outdoor area in front of a museum to explore the towering sculptures in that space. He calls our attention to enormous outdoor sculptures by artists like Claes Oldenberg and Alexander Calder. As viewers learn in the

first art-a-fact, these sculptures are considered “stabiles,” which are the opposites of so-called mobiles constructed by artists like Alexander Calder. Spohn takes a stroll inside the museum to learn about the three-dimensional art within, then meets with a group of students outside to talk about the definition of sculpture. Students delineate how sculpture differs from two-dimensional art, which leads Spohn into a discussion of how the shadow of a sculpture can vary depending upon the angle or placement of the object that casts the shadow.

Spohn moves the group to a playground and directs the students to use their bodies as sculpture. In this exercise, students strike various poses and have a partner trace their shadow on a large piece of paper or cardboard, thus creating a record that will tell a story of how they were positioned in a particular moment. Spohn ensures that the students have fun while tracing and posing, creating an atmosphere that is lively and filled with curiosity at the possibilities fostered by the activity. With Spohn's help, students cut out the outlines of their shadows and experiment with ways of positioning the cut-out figures as sculpture. Images that were once two-dimensional outlines become three-dimensional as sculpture, thus reinforcing the episode’s conception of sculpture as a new way of seeing something.

The teacher’s guide focuses on the idea of light and shadow, encouraging students to notice how different types of light influence the shadow of a sculpture. Interestingly, it also encourages some abstraction, reminding teachers that students will likely find it more interesting to exaggerate shadow shapes rather than to simply trace a “shadow blob” (p. 13). The location of the sculpture is also presented as an important factor. For instance, if an artist is commissioned to create a sculpture for a certain location, the artist must take the environment into account. Teachers are directed to “commission” students to create a sculpture for a specific location; suggested sites include the school library, a

bus stop, a playground, or a cafeteria. Sculpture is highlighted as a unique medium in its capacity to exist in various types of locations, both indoor and outdoor. Therefore, environmental considerations (like the light that will produce the sculpture's shadow) must be taken into account.

Episode 7: "Serious Business"

This episode opens in a playground setting, with Spohn again making his entrance by riding atop the artcycle. In the opening scene, he plays with an oversized jack-in-the-box-type contraption that has been placed on the playground. He then turns to the audience to ask his viewers a pointed question: "Ever wonder what makes a good toy?"

The question leads him to the studio of toy designers Anne and Dianne, who are the "idea people" behind many of the toys that are now familiar to us. They emphasize the importance of the experimentation process, explaining that their job sometimes entails simply playing with toys in order to spark new ideas. Oftentimes, the simple juxtaposition of two seemingly unrelated words or objects can be the impetus for a new idea, and they discover these combinations during the experimentation process. Once they have conceived a new idea, the designers sketch their visualization of the new toy to show their client. As we learn from the episode's first art-a-fact, toys have been around for ages; in fact, the first water-bubbling bird-whistle was invented over 700 years ago.

Back at the playground, Spohn experiments with tacking long strips of foam-board to one another to make a model for a toy he dreams up, then creates another model for a toy in which a tiny ball must be navigated through a paper maze. Spohn's ideas are whimsical, often very simple, and invariably playful. He closes the episode by emphasizing the importance of the design and experimentation process in creating a toy, if it is to be successful.

The teacher's guide makes use of the paired-word technique—as described by toy designers Anne and Dianne—to evoke imaginative images students can use in their own toy-design project. The activity sheet has students come up with a list of nouns, and a list of adjectives, with the thought that students may find that an unexpected combination of words ignites an idea for a toy. Additionally, students are asked to think about what makes a toy engaging and brainstorm about improvements that could be made to a favorite toy or game. Lastly, students are directed to make working models of toys they conceive of in class, as well as design advertisements for these toys.

Episode 8: "Whatizit?"

The last episode of the season opens with a reminder from Spohn about the importance of our individual point of view. A lot of people think linear perspective was just a trick used by painters in the 15th century, says Spohn to the camera. "But there's another kind of perspective that you won't find in any painting, because it goes with *you* wherever *you* go," he reminds us. Our perspective, i.e., how we see the world, is responsible for the artistic decisions we make.

Spohn exercises his own perspective in this episode, which is focused on the production of a colossally sized gumball mosaic (the largest in the world, he says) that he builds with a group of students. With the students' help, he converts his model drawing—a small, whimsical image of circus animals—to an intricate 12 square-foot curtain of gumballs, which are carefully laid out to match his sketched image. He relates his mosaic to other images that are made up of hundreds or even thousands of small units, such as computer screens (as a modern example) or Impressionist paintings (as a more historical example).

Back in the studio, Spohn uses the idea of a mosaic to inform a grid exercise that he demonstrates. He places a clear, grid-lined transparency sheet over a cartoon-ish drawing he has made. Limiting himself to one color per grid square, the host makes a copy of the original drawing. Only this time, since he is only coloring within the confines of the squares of the grid, this version of the drawing is radically simplified and pixilated. When he renders a second duplicate of the cartoon, this time using smaller squares, the image is more consistent with the original. Overall, the exercise demonstrates the concept that more squares in a mosaic results in an increasingly detailed, clear image. As a closing line, Spohn references the theme from his quote at the beginning of the episode, saying: "Remember, whether you focus on the big picture or on its parts, the way that you see something depends on your point of view."

The activity sheets in the teacher's manual reinforce the idea of more grid squares (or, more generally, individual units of color) being the key to a more detailed drawing. They also encourage students to look at a group of shapes (already drawn-in on the activity sheets) and find objects or pleasing designs within the larger cluster. The manual likens random groups of objects—traffic, schools of fish, flocks of birds, gravel roads, and tree leaves—to mosaics in that they are all comprised of individual units. Thus, there is also a component of students conceiving of everyday objects in a new and creative way. The final project that the teacher's manual suggests is a copy of Spohn's gumball mosaic; students stick colored bits of construction paper to a larger grid according to a "gumball map" that the manual provides. In the end, the class has its own replica of Spohn's gumball mosaic.

VIDEO STILLS FROM *EUREKA! THE CREATIVE ARTS SERIES*

Following are three images from the *Eureka!* series.

Figure 1 - Spohn takes a ride on the “artcyle” in “What a Relief!.”

Figure 2 - Spohn demonstrates relief printing in “What a Relief!.”

Figure 3 - Film still from the opening credits.

CONCLUSION

In the first part of this chapter, I gave a general summary of the feel, pace and tone of *Eureka!*, and a description of how host Franz Spohn functions in the episodes. In the first section, I also discussed the overall format and style of the teacher's guide and accompanying activity sheets.

Next, I recounted each of the eight episodes of *Eureka!*. In doing this, I endeavored to communicate the main idea of each episode and elucidate the theme of each. I also, when relevant, described various components of the episode, like scene

changes and art-a-facts. Any time an episode featured an artist or other professional, I included that information within the episode description. I have recounted this television show to a highly detailed extent to ensure that I was being thorough in perceiving any of the larger, more general takeaways that might have resonated with a young audience member in the 9 to 12-year old age bracket. Additionally, I have tried to see Spohn as young adolescent would have, taking note of what I found engaging and what content "grabbed" me as a viewer.

We, as educators, must view such educational content with the understanding that many activities will compete for a young adolescent's attention. At school, distractions run amok—and that is to say nothing of the pastimes available at home, many of which provide the type of instant gratification that is flashier, louder, and more high-profile than the quiet rewards offered by slower acquisitions of skills in artmaking. Thus, the question, "Why spend time making art?" becomes even more relevant and pressing for youngsters in this age bracket. It is this question to which I will attempt to respond in the next chapter – not with my own answers, but with the answers provided through careful observation of *Eureka!* in its choices of content and methods of delivery.

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis and Interpretations

In the previous four chapters, I have examined the eight episodes of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series* on which I have focused my research. I have also explained my methods for grouping the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) into general, theory-based categories. These categories, as I have mentioned, simplified the various purposes into broader schools of thought. Once I had analyzed the messages of the series and classified the elements of *Eureka!* under the purpose with which they were most closely aligned, I could determine which overall category the series fell within by examining which categories were most heavily weighted with evidence. This, as I detailed in Chapter 3, was my method for determining the broader art educational theory of the series. In this chapter, I discuss my findings regarding the educational leanings of the program and aim to classify them within a larger school of art educational theory.

As in Chapter 4, each episode is detailed in the following section. In this instance, however, I have a different goal. Whereas the goal of Chapter 4 was to review each episode's plot, here I am concerned with revealing the values—and not the summary of events—inherent in the episode's content and methods of delivery. With this in mind, the review of each episode includes some, but not all, of the purposes with which I identified it during my data collection process.

Before discussing the episodes, I review here the list of the 45 recognized purposes. Presented previously in Chapter 3, the list is as follows:

1. Build a sense of appreciation and "good taste"
2. Increase vocational possibilities

3. Encourage independent thinking
4. Discover and develop artistic talent
5. Cultivate and express a sense of beauty
6. Promote skills in observation
7. Train the hand, mind, and eye
8. Assist students in their other school subjects
9. Provide a break from other school subjects
10. Engage in a form of play
11. Develop democratic behavior in citizens
12. Provide an outlet for self-expression
13. Learn elements and principles of design
14. Promote neatness, dexterity, and precision
15. Generate an appreciation for nature
16. Generate an appreciation for the built environment
17. Enhance social and emotional growth
18. Provide a universal language, spoken by all people
19. Build moral citizens
20. Strengthen national security
21. Promote and discover beauty
22. Initiate and expand opportunities to use art materials
23. Understand art processes—think and work like an artist
24. Encourage spontaneity and originality
25. Provide a concrete outlet for imagination
26. Further students' character development
27. Build skills in problem solving

28. Investigate and study everyday objects
29. Have aesthetic experiences
30. Learn a vocabulary of expression
31. Cultivate aesthetic judgment
32. Provide a therapeutic outlet
33. Express creative thinking
34. Make intelligent choices with regard to home furnishings, apparel, constructed landscapes, and other areas of daily life
35. Instill cultural values
36. Instill multicultural values
37. Promote leisure time enjoyment
38. Develop respect for one's own effort and the effort of others
39. Develop visual perception
40. Develop visual literacy
41. Learn about art and artists from the past
42. Increase ability to discuss works of art
43. Become knowledgeable consumers
44. Learn about the surrounding visual culture
45. Learn about the surrounding material culture

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, I have made a slight amendment to Bolin's original list by numbering the purposes 1 through 45. In both this chapter and Chapter 6, I will refer to each purpose in conjunction with its assigned number.

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Episode 1: "What a Relief!"

In this first episode, a respect for nature and the outdoors is immediately apparent, both with comments from host Franz Spohn and the follow-up instructions from the teacher's guide. As the series opens to the first scene in the first episode, the audience sees that Spohn is on a playground with a set of relief printing materials. When he blots ink onto the outdoor surfaces of his choosing, he mentions that it is a good idea to use water-based inks as an environmentally sound practice. This point is repeated in the teacher's guide. In reaction to this overt suggestion that students take measures to avoid disturbing the ecosystem, I wrote this information under Purpose #15: "generate an appreciation for nature."

This first episode is also a testament to the importance of Purpose #21, "promote and discover beauty." Both dialogue within the episode and directives within the teacher's manual encourage the discovery of beauty by having students hunt for interesting shapes around the playground and in nature. This sharpens students' sensitivity to aesthetic features of their environment and therefore fuels the discovery of uniqueness and beauty.

Episode 2: "Art Again (Recyclables)"

Episode 2, "Art Again," features an artist who reclaims discarded objects to create sculptures that resemble animals, a practice that limits his choice of materials to those he finds while foraging. This way of working provides an entryway for Spohn to introduce the concept of problem-solving in art, explaining that this process dictates that one must

use a limited array of materials to come to an artistic solution. The teacher's manual even includes the word "persistence" as a vocabulary term for the episode, listing the definition as the "determined effort to solve a creative problem" (p. 5). I classified this information under Purpose #38: "develop respect for one's own effort and the effort of others." Similarly, the teacher's manual instructs teachers to emphasize that "being an artist means that one must continue to search for an appropriate creative solution to a problem once everyone else has given up" (p. 4). This and other material from the episode was well-suited to be listed under Purpose #27, "build skills in problem solving," as well.

The concept of artistic expression is mentioned several times within the episode, especially within dialogue by Spohn, who tells us that artists express a thought or feeling with their art. Thus, Purpose #30, "learn a vocabulary of expression," and Purpose #12, "provide an outlet for self-expression," were also germane to this episode.

It is worthwhile to note that such implications about creativity echo the sentiments of Viktor Lowenfeld (1957) in *Creative and Mental Growth*. Lowenfeld would no doubt have applauded *Eureka!*'s efforts to channel such skills in childhood. Says Lowenfeld (1957):

> Art education, introduced in the early years of childhood may well mean the difference between a flexible, creative human being and one who, in spite of all learning, will not be able to apply it and will remain an individual who lacks inner resources and has difficulty in his relationship to the environment. (p. 2)

Episode 3: "Oh! My Papyrus"

Episode 3 heavily embodies the beliefs associated with Purpose #33: "express creative thinking." Spohn visits a craftsman who custom-makes paper in a studio, then begins his demonstration by brainstorming methods in which paper can be used in

unconventional ways. As a follow-up, the teacher's manual reinforces this idea, saying, "students are encouraged to think of the uses of paper in creative expression" (p. 6).

The episode's stint in the papermaking studio communicates a conviction that students be exposed to the papermaking as an artistic technique – all this, it seems, for the sake of exposure as an end in itself. Therefore, Purpose #22, "initiate and expand opportunities to use art materials," also applies to this episode.

Purpose #41, "learn about art and artists from the past," is also evident in "Oh! My Papyrus," this time in the episode's art-a-fact. The art-a-fact states that a group of designers in the 1960s made suits from a type of paper similar to handi-wipes.

The art-a-fact about innovative 1960s-era artists also belies a conviction that artmaking exists so that children may "express creative thinking" (Purpose #33). The choice of subject matter – i.e., unconventional artists and unorthodox artistic practice – demonstrates a belief that art is taught in order to "encourage spontaneity and originality" (Purpose #24).

Episode 4: "First Impressions"

This episode gives ample attention to vocabulary words, techniques and tools associated with the practice of screen-printing. Included in the teacher's manual section on vocabulary terms are the words "screen," "impression," "frame," "serigraphy," and "edition." *Eureka!*'s attention to coaching students on the acquisition of printmaking-related terms is symptomatic of the value it attaches to Purpose #42, "increase ability to discuss works of art." This feature of the episode also merits the inclusion of Purpose #23: "understand art processes—think and work like an artist."

The episode's focus on art processes and techniques falls within the domain of the art educational philosophy espoused in Elliot Eisner's 1972 *Educating Artistic Vision*. In

this book, Eisner defends his theory on the importance of children developing familiarity, comfort and control with art materials in the studio, saying:

> When children capture a sense of control and use it in the pursuit of purpose, they tend to be charged up in a way that is quite different from a passing infatuation with novelty. Children who feel a sense of mastery seldom need to be motivated by a teacher. Their own delight in being able to achieve, in being able to give form to their thoughts, their images and their feelings is tremendously gratifying to them. (p.161)

In other words, Eisner believes that an effective art education program will train its students to think and work like an artist.

Although the vocabulary terms in the teacher's manual indicate that the series values a working knowledge of traditional processes and established techniques, other aspects of the episode, such as the first art-a-fact, show that the program's creators want to "encourage spontaneity and originality" (Purpose #24). The art-a-fact, which reports about artists who make prints out of melted chocolate, is one of many examples throughout the series of a general reverence for unconventional, experimental-type art.

Episode 5: "Temple of the Muse"

Episode 5, during which students visit a museum, is the first in the series to support Purpose #2: "increase vocational possibilities." In this episode, viewers learn about the professional positions related to curatorial work and the relationship of those professionals to a working artist. The choice to include this particular brand of content also shows that the program conceives of art education as a way to achieve Purpose #35, "instill cultural values." Not only does *Eureka!* facilitate learning about the creative process and methods that support the production of art, but it also uses screen time to

illustrate the role of a professional artist in society (therefore acclimating students to a particular practice in American culture).

This was also the first episode in which Purpose #45, "learn about the surrounding material culture," appears as a value of the series. This is apparent in the episode follow-up in the teacher's manual, which instructs teachers to lead a project in which students make a time capsule. The capsule, the manual says, should contain photographs of the students and other items that they consider significant. Then, students answer discussion questions: "What would someone 500 years from now discover about us?" asks the manual (p. 11). This practice of investigating everyday objects, analyzing their purpose and function in society, and then using that knowledge to gain insight about cultural values constitutes the discipline known as material culture studies. And the manual's suggestion that students engage in a material culture activity supports the inclusion of Purpose #45.

Episode 6: "The 3 D's"

When Spohn looks at sculpture in this episode, he takes the time to come to his own conclusions about the work before he reads its posted title. The teacher's manual reinforces this practice, saying: "When looking at sculpture, students should generate their own working titles prior to knowing the real title to focus awareness, generate their own opinions, and to personalize the creation and appreciation of three-dimensional art" (p. 12). This statement has several implications in terms of a value system for the series, but it is most evocative of Purpose #3, "encourage independent thinking." By generating their own titles for sculptures, students are using their inner resources to relate to another individual's means of expression. In doing so, students are learning to look critically at

works of art, so I also classified this information under Purpose #31, "cultivate aesthetic judgment."

The episode also demonstrates that the program places value on acquiring art historical knowledge, evoking Purpose #41, "learn about art and artists from the past." Spohn visits a sculpture exhibit at a museum to look at famous works of art, and the accompanying section of the teacher's guide encourages teachers to take their students to a sculpture exhibit (p. 13). Overall, the content of the episode reveals *Eureka!*'s concern that students learn how to interpret art.

Purpose #41 evokes the sentiments of Elliot Eisner in *Educating Artistic Vision*. Says Eisner, "Art forms in each period, each location, each culture mutually influence each other…One major aim of discipline-based art education is to help students understand these relationships by examining the interaction between art and culture over time" (18). Thus, Eisner would have approved of this episode's activities, which expose children to art historical artifacts.

Episode 7: "Serious Business"

When Spohn visits a pair of successful toy designers in their studio in Episode 7, he learns about some of the strategies professionals use to dream up new ideas for toys. One of these methods, as they tell Spohn, involves a game in which they pair two random words together, such as "bubbly" and "dirt." These two seemingly incongruous words lead the designers to form mental images, from which new ideas emerge. Those ideas give rise to experimentation in the toy studio, and, if they are successful, become the newest toy on the shelves. The inclusion of this content in the episode—and the choice to center the episode around the creative processes behind toy design—is strong evidence of *Eureka!*'s perception of art education as a means to support Purpose #33, "express

creative thinking." Further, Spohn's demonstration shows students how to conduct their own practice of experimentation; he uses simple materials to make several toys of his own. Later, the follow-up section of the teacher's guide introduces brainstorming as an essential part of the artmaking process. The teacher's guide encourages teachers to tell their students that there is no need to "get it right" on their first try in order to be successful as creative individuals.

The episode's nod to creativity and experimentation recalls the writings of Viktor Lowenfeld. Says Lowenfeld (1960): "it is one of the foremost tasks of education to develop all potential abilities in man and make them function. This should be true not only for the intellect but also for the unfolding of man's creative potentialities" (p. 23).

In addition, watching the episode is likely to deepen audiences' appreciation for toys themselves, which are, as we learn, tangible products borne of the creative process. Thus, I also judged that the episode supports Purpose #16: "generate an appreciation for the built environment."

Episode 8: "Whatizit?"

Episode 8 builds effective visual comparisons between historical works of art and modern methods of design. The episode opens up by comparing the glowing pieces of a stained glass window to the colorful pixel units of television and computer screens. The teacher's manual even instructs teachers to discuss the similarities and differences between stained glass windows and computer screens before having students watch the episode. The directive of the teacher's manual, combined with the theme of the episode, suggest that *Eureka!* supports Purpose #40, "develop visual literacy." Similarly, this discussion elevates Purpose #6, "promote skills in observation." Additionally, encouraging students to look closely at an everyday object (in this case, a computer

screen) and treat it as a source of knowledge is sufficient cause for the inclusion of Purpose #28, "investigate and study everyday objects."

The discipline of visual culture studies, which discusses modern-day imagery like Spohn's mural, is described by Kerry Freedman (2000):

> The same techniques that artists have used for centuries to make imagery seductive, didactic, and powerful are being used today on the grandest of scales. From my social perspective, it is the responsibility of our field to address the issues and problems of student experience with visual culture. (p. 325)

Freedman's argument for the inclusion of visual culture in an art education curriculum is supported by "Whatizit?," which invests ordinary objects with importance by including them in discussions of compelling artworks.

When students complete the written follow-up activity to the episode, they learn a basic fact about image-making: That the inclusion of more units in a mosaic amounts to a clearer, more detailed image. Says the teacher's manual: "Students who view the program…will be able to describe image resolution as a function of the quantity and size of units used to create a particular image" (p. 16). In this instance, students are learning practical skills in design that enable them to execute artistic processes with technical ability. Therefore, I associated information from this follow-up activity with Purpose #23: "understand art processes—think and work like an artist." The information presented in this section of the teacher's manual focused solely on the improvement of processes and technique, and was therefore fit for association with Purpose #23.

INTERPRETATIONS DRAWN FROM DATA

The Prominence of Group A

Throughout the eight episodes, the *Eureka!* series does an impressive job covering a wide range of media and effectively representing the myriad ways in which adolescents can find expression in art. One of the most noticeable characteristics of the series is its respect for its audience. All the activities that are either recorded on camera or suggested as a follow-up to an episode are innately engaging for young adolescents. The first episode, for example, makes use of a child's natural desire to go outside and explore when Spohn instructs the class to go seek natural patterns on outdoor surfaces (surfaces which are then blotted with ink and recorded on a piece of paper, making relief prints). The second episode leads into an activity in which Spohn constructs a duck-like monster out of odds-and-ends from the would-be trash heap. This activity teaches re-utilization of objects and resourcefulness with materials available while simultaneously mirroring the sort of free-form play in which children engage naturally. It is easy to make this case for many of the other activities featured throughout the series, including pop-up card-making, printmaking on t-shirts, shadow-tracing (and then improvising on those shadows), designing and creating toys, and constructing a miniature "exhibition space" in which candy wrappers are displayed.

Given *Eureka!*'s imaginative outlook, it stands clearly that the purpose under which I recorded the most information (i.e., "evidence") was Purpose #33, "express creative thinking." Again and again during the course of the series, students are encouraged to use their imaginations to come up with a solution to a visual or conceptual problem. Boundaries are rarely given; rather, students are pushed to use their basic instincts of play for free-form experimentation in the realm of the visual. Purpose #33

was more prevalent in the series than any of the other purposes. Below, I have outlined the episodes in which Purpose #33 is evident.

- As I have discussed previously, *Eureka!*'s second episode, "Art Again," is about reclaiming everyday objects and using them in an artistic context. The episode follows artist Leo Sewell, who makes use of discarded items to create sculptures of animals. As a follow-up to the episode, the teacher's manual suggests that students come up with ways in which the objects in their classroom could be used in new, innovative ways. Specifically, they are directed to imagine how the objects might be used by different types of creative people, i.e., painters, sculptors and dancers (p. 5).
- In Episode 3, "Oh! My Papyrus," Spohn conducts a demonstration in which he uses paper in a new, innovative way – he fashions it into a pop-up card. The teacher's manual reinforces this, saying in its summary of the episode, "students are encouraged to think of the uses of paper in creative expression" (p. 6).
- In Episode 5, "Temple of the Muse," students visit a museum to discover what goes on behind the scenes of an art exhibit, the manual directs that teachers have students identify museums in their area, and, as a class activity, "create a billboard design to attract people to a particular exhibit" (p. 11).
- In Episode 6, "The 3D's," Spohn mentions that he enjoys sculpture because there are so many different ways of seeing it—a comment that has similar implications to the sentiments of Episode 10, when students are encouraged to look for secret stories and messages in works of art. Then, in the manual's follow-up of Episode 6, students are invited to come up with an idea to express for a sculpture of their own. Students must also decide on a location in which to put

their sculpture—a challenge which reinforces the importance of the context in which a sculpture is placed.

- In Episode 7, where the program visits toy designers in their studio in order to better understand the process of idea-conception for toys, Spohn questions the designers about their strategies for coming up with toy ideas. This focus on the conception of ideas reinforces the message of the importance of the creative process.
- Spohn then concludes Episode 7 by showing students how to experiment with toy design. Continuing in the spirit of the experimentation discussed by the episode's featured toy designers, Spohn constructs his own toys using simple materials. In the same vein of creativity, the teacher's manual introduces brainstorming as a concept.
- In Episode 8, "Whatizit?," the teacher's manual encourages students to look at groups of objects – like traffic, flocks of birds, and schools of fish – as mosaics in themselves.

As I detailed in Chapter 3, my main method for organizing data was grouping the purposes together into broad categories. Purpose #33, "express creative thinking," was put into a group that included other similar purposes. Other purposes residing within this group included Purpose #29: "have aesthetic experiences," Purpose #12: "provide an outlet for self-expression," and Purpose #17: "enhance social and emotional growth." From my interpretative perspective, all the purposes that belonged to this group (Group A) supported the goal of encouraging students to develop their own unique voice through self-expression. Problem-solving, experimentation, creativity and imagination are the themes that united Group A.

It is not surprising, then, to find that most of the other purposes within Group A are also heavily populated with "evidence." For instance, there is much information to support the position that *Eureka!* is directed toward Purpose #27: "build skills in problem solving." This purpose, in fact, was most prevalent—second only to Purpose #33. Third in line is Purpose #25: "provide a concrete outlet for imagination," which, of course, is closely related to Purpose #33. Creative thinking is done using the imagination, and, conversely, the imagination is fueled by creative thinking.

Group C, which contains purposes most closely associated with Discipline-Based Art Education, is second to Group A in the amount of support it receives. The purposes that I placed within Group C are conceptually united; they all assert the importance of training students to think and work like artists. As I have mentioned, the content of this group includes Purpose #31, "cultivate aesthetic judgment;" Purpose #22, "initiate and expand opportunity to use art materials;" and, most notably, Purpose #23, "understand art processes—think and work like an artist," among others. This group was exceptionally difficult to populate with evidence from the series because it sometimes seemed that every activity Spohn undertook with students could be classified within it. After all, every episode involves the use of art materials. So, in theory, Purpose #22, "initiate and expand opportunity to use art materials," could receive a tally mark every time Spohn or a student picks up a printmaking screen, a jar of paint, a crayon, or the like. To control for this, I recorded evidence under "initiate and expand opportunity to use art materials" and the other purposes only when Spohn makes statements implying that the end-goal of art education is to become a practicing artist or to become highly proficient in art.

With this stipulation in place, Group C received the second-largest collection of evidence. For instance, the teacher's manual supplement to Episode 2 positions students in the footsteps of professional artists with this statement: "To see like an artist, it

necessary to exercise your perspective. Artists are free to look at things however they would like to see them" (p. 2). The teacher's guide supplement to Episode 4 instructs teaches to ensure that students can describe and identify necessary screen printmaking tools and materials, thus placing emphasis on the acquisition of a body of knowledge related to printmaking. The teacher's manual accompaniment to Episode 5, "Temple of the Muse," instructs teachers to "introduce Franz Spohn as a real artist who frequently has his own work exhibited in many different museums" (p. 15). This statement constitutes support for the transformation of art students into artists. Indeed, every episode's two-page supplement in the teacher's manual has a list of vocabulary words related to the featured medium. For Episode 4, for example, the keywords listed are "screen," "impression," "registration," "frame," "serigraphy," and "edition." In this way, the manual represents art as a body of knowledge that can be acquired. So Group C received a tally for this characteristic of the series.

Just as Groups A and C are heavily represented in the series, others are noticeably absent. And, if we are to ascertain *Eureka!*'s messages about art education by taking note of what category is most strongly supported, then we can also learn about the show's purposes by examining any purposes or groups that are omitted.

For example, Group B, which supports art education with the aim of producing classically well-educated students, receives little recognition from the series. However, one of the purposes within it, "build a sense of appreciation and good taste," collected three tally marks of evidence. This was because the value of developing appreciation for art was present in a few of the episodes, including Episode 8, in which students are coaxed to appreciate stained glass windows (which, as Spohn points out, draw upon the same principle as a pixelated computer screen).

Group D purports art education as an opportunity to allow students leisure time and play. Although *Eureka!* is characterized by many statements about how art is fun, those statements were not presented in a manner implying that mere enjoyment is the end-goal of art education. As a result, the only purpose with any real significance within Group D is "engage in a form of play," which received seven tallies of evidence.

Group E posits art education as a means of raising awareness of consumer culture, and this group was third most heavily populated behind Groups A and C. Purposes within this group include "become knowledgeable consumers," and "investigate and study everyday objects." Both of these purposes, particularly the latter, were well-represented. For instance, Episode 7 instructs teachers to lead students in exploring toys and games from their childhood to figure out what makes them fun and interesting. In Episode 3, the show endeavors to awaken students to the potential of paper, which can take on a variety of sculptural forms when it is folded, for instance (and is therefore to be viewed as more than a simple surface on which to write or draw). In Episode 8, when Spohn constructs a giant gumball mosaic with students, he informs us that his idea was inspired by looking at a gumball on his drawing table as a small piece of art. The art-a-fact in Episode 2 accounts for my first realization that the series advocated for students as knowledgeable consumers. As the fact says, "If you are average, by the time you are in 6th grade, you will have produced 11 tons of trash." I saw this as another sign that *Eureka!*'s brand of art education involves raising awareness of consumer culture.

Group F argues for art as means of increasing the chances of a student succeeding in school overall and in the wider culture. Within this group, "increase vocational possibilities" is most strongly supported by the series. Episode 5, which educates viewers on careers within the museum world, provides the heaviest evidence for this group. The teacher's manual then reinforces this message, having students act as museum curators by

designing their own museum exhibit as a follow-up to the episode. Episode 7 features Spohn questioning a pair of toy designers on how they arrived at their positions. The process of toy design is emphasized in the teacher's manual, too: "Students are introduced to the path an idea follows from sketches and "mock-ups" to experimental; models as the idea is transformed into a commercial product" (p. 14).

Groups G and H, which contain the most obscure purposes for art education, received no support at all from the series. Group G proposed art education as a means of aiding in nationalistic endeavors, and Group H supported art education to increase cross-cultural understanding. Purposes within Group G include "promote neatness, dexterity, and precision," "develop democratic behavior in citizens," "build moral citizens," and strengthen national security." Within Group H are only two purposes: "provide a universal language, spoken by all people," and "instill multicultural values." With no on-air statements, lesson content, implicit communication or teacher's manual content to support these purposes, I concluded that these last two groups are not part of *Eureka!*'s teaching philosophy.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have recounted each of the eight episodes of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*. In doing so, I have analyzed each one for its art educational implications, using the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) as a guide. Although the series presented a diverse array of convictions about artmaking, one purpose was most prevalent: Purpose #33, "express creative thinking." Further, the group to which Purpose #33 belongs—Group A—was most well-represented in the series overall. This is, I theorize, because *Eureka!*'s creators knowingly or unknowingly

subscribed to art educational values associated with problem-solving, experimentation, creativity and imagination. Thus, their value systems are manifest in the activities chosen and dialogue used throughout the series.

In the following chapter, I use my findings and conclusions to make recommendations going forward. I will also touch upon the performative aspects of *Eureka!* and speculate on how we might apply these techniques to classroom teaching. Lastly, I will reflect on my own research methods with a critical eye and make suggestions on how this discourse can continue in future writing.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the previous five chapters, I have analyzed the components of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series* in relation to the list of 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10). I begin this concluding chapter by revisiting my central research question. Next, my findings are reviewed, followed by a section in which I make recommendations to various entities. Finally, I offer suggestions for a future model of art educational programming.

REFLECTIONS ON CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

This research was undertaken to learn the following: What is the dominant art educational approach taken by the producers of *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*, and what messages does this program communicate about the reasons for learning art? How can we make use of this information about the purposes of art education to enhance our understanding of (a) how an effective art educator presents material, and (b) how a successful art education television program may function?

When first embarking upon my research, I favored this question because I believed that it fulfilled a need in the field. Much literature exists on different methods of art education; many researchers have expressed their views on the reasons for its importance. I find, however, that there is a need for material in which researchers critically analyze an existing curriculum in order to distill its salient messages about art education. What is the use in studying the writings of Lowenfeld or Eisner, for example,

unless we are to see how such types of art education models are being utilized (or eschewed) in specific curricular models?

The formulation of this research question was my response to a more personal curiosity as well: I was intrigued by the program's host, Franz Spohn. Spohn is one of those individuals whose interactions with children are so natural and comfortable that he himself almost seems like some sort of grown-up child. He has a strong understanding of the types of artmaking that will be engaging for young adolescents (the program's target audience). Further, he knows how to relate to his audience in a way that draws viewers in completely. His level of emotional intelligence is high—indeed, it seems as if he could teach any subject and make it interesting for students viewing the program. Watching Spohn deliver lessons recalls the ideal performance of a master teacher. Specifically, his performance echoes writings on the style of teaching that some educators have termed "edutainment." This phenomenon is described by education researchers Johnson and McElroy: "The good performer shows vulnerability, excitement, confidence, wit, and likability [*sic*]. The good performance is one in which a connection has been made and felt by the audience" (2010, p. 159). The performer to whom the authors refer is, of course, the teacher. As demonstrated within the eight episodes of the series, Spohn has the performative characteristics that Johnson and McElroy cite as necessary for achievement of "edutainer" status.

This brought me to the informal question that was at the core of my personal interest in this research: Why did this charismatic man choose to devote his time to art education? What is so important about teaching art to children, and what did he think those children could gain from it?

I recognize that others might contend that this question would be better-answered with an interview of Spohn himself, perhaps supplemented by an interview with the

program's producers. But I was not as interested in hearing the overt goals of *Eureka!*'s creators. The answer I was seeking was contained within the episodes themselves. It lay within the words Spohn uses to describe activities, the way in which he interacts with children, scripted and non-scripted material during his time on-camera, and the goals he states or implies at the beginning and end of the episodes. I predicted that these features would be sufficient to ascertain the values of the program.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

Part (A): How an Effective Art Educator Presents Material

Throughout the entire series, Spohn leads young viewers through the learning process by way of his easygoing demeanor and penchant for experimentation. It is undoubtedly his instructional style that contributes heavily to the show's effectiveness. Specifically, the following characteristics and actions explain Spohn's fulfillment of "edutainer" rank (Johnson & McElroy, p. 18):

- In every project Spohn takes on, his enthusiasm for artmaking propels him forward with excitement. His performance as host never seems forced or contrived in any way; he is simply compelled by an innate sense of curiosity and experimentation to play in the realm of the visual.
- He creates his own art during demonstrations. Because most of his drawings are of cartoon characters of his own creation, his on-camera artmaking endears him to his youthful audience. Therefore, the genre of art he produces is familiar and non-intimidating to his young viewers and ensures that they relate to him as an artist. This component of the series also lends an authenticity to Spohn, whose enthusiasm for art education is

even more assuredly genuine to students who see him create his own work.

- Spohn is mindful of his audience. He demonstrates an understanding that many children with short attention spans may find it difficult to sit through long demonstrations in which the instructor painstakingly perfects an art project. Instead, he often sacrifices perfect accuracy in favor of a fast-paced demonstration that is easy for his audience to follow with interest.
- He concludes each episode with a segment in which students are given instructions and ideas for how to incorporate the concepts and techniques of the episode into their own artmaking. His practical examples distill the episode's concepts down into a salient set of directions for how students can learn the relevant skills.
- He displays a trait absolutely vital to successful "edutainment" (Johnson & McElroy, p. 18)—he does not take himself too seriously. He often wears silly costumes or rides the "artcycle." In Episode 4, filming is concluded with a camera shot of him sitting shirtless in the bathtub as he soaps up both himself and the paint-clogged printmaking screens he has just used.
- His unpredictable sense of humor and playfulness is contrasted with a comforting sense of consistency in the format of the show. Viewers know that each episode will commence with the same theme music, which features the same illustrations of Franz dressed up in silly costumes and as various historical figures.
- Spohn's demeanor reflects a theatrical sensibility that captures his audience's attention. He faces the camera directly and accents his speech with thought-provoking questions to us, his audience. His tone of voice

rises and falls theatrically with dramatic statements, especially those that reflect a main idea of the episode. One example of this is in Episode 7, “Serious Business,” when he opens the episode by playing with an enormous jack-in-the-box, winding the handle until an adult-sized figure pops out. After the top bursts open, he turns to the camera and asks the question that defines this episode: “Ever wonder what makes a good toy?”

- Spohn presents artmaking as a problem-solving activity to which there is no single right answer. He instills viewers with a sense of possibility and excitement by emphasizing the open-ended, discovery-oriented nature of making art. In this way, he eases the pressure that some students may feel with regard to making a final product that looks “good.” In encouraging students to embrace unpredictability, he celebrates the occurrence of "happy accidents.” In this way, his emphasis on working hard to locate a solution to a visual problem is counterbalanced by a playfulness that is apparent throughout the series.
- Spohn eases students into unfamiliar territory in artmaking by relating new concepts to the comfortable and familiar. In an introduction to relief printing, for example, he asks students to imagine what would happen if they stepped in a puddle of ink with sneakers on and then stepped onto a piece of paper. The print that the soles of their shoes would make, he explains, embodies the same concept as relief printing.
- The series addresses the cognitive—as well as the affective—development of the child. This is apparent with the series’ inclusion of the art-a-facts, which inform viewers of an interesting tidbit that relates to the episode’s concept or medium. As an example: Episode 3, “Oh! My Papyrus,” briefly

interrupts programming to tell viewers that fashion designers in the 1960s created disposable suits and dresses out of a paper similar to handi-wipes.

- The teacher's guide, which Spohn co-authored with producer Gordon Joseph Murray, follows a reliably organized format that allows teachers to effectively build on concepts presented in each episode of *Eureka!*. The guide not only gives a summary of what was taught in the episode, it also gives suggestions for projects teachers can complete with their class. These suggested projects always build on the main concepts of the program and enrich skill sets that relate to the medium that has been introduced in the episode.

Part (B): How a Successful Art Education Television Program May Function

In Chapter 5, I systematically reviewed the *Eureka!* series and offered a sampling of some of the purposes associated with each episode. When viewed in full, the episodes represent an impressive variety of reasons for artmaking. The most prevalent, however, was Purpose #33, "express creative thinking." The program's emphasis on creativity is echoed in the writings of Viktor Lowenfeld—particularly in *Creative and Mental Growth*, the seminal text on what has come to be known as child-centered art education. Says Lowenfeld (1957):

> It is the aim of art education to use the creative process to make people more creative regardless of where this creativeness will be applied. If Johnny grows up and through his aesthetic experiences has become a more creative person who will apply it to his living and to his profession, one of the main aims of art education will have been fulfilled. (p. 5)

If we are to conceive of *Eureka!* as promoting creativity and free expression above all, then we might surmise that Spohn's motivation for teaching art is similar to

Lowenfeld's motivation for doing so. For Lowenfeld**,** education is the means of training a student to lead a rich life, live in the spirit of cooperation, reside in peace with himself/herself, and strive for spiritual harmony. Conversely, Lowenfeld (1957) says:

> If we live in discord with ourselves, it is also education which has neglected to emphasize emotional growth, the ability to adjust to new situations, and thus help us solve our difficulties in life; if we are dull toward all the riches which life offers, it is also education which did not develop in us the sensitivity and the spiritual responsiveness which is essential for its appreciation. (p. 2)

Lowenfeld's ideas pertaining to education and the growth that should occur as a result contains parallels to the creative expression theme of *Eureka!*. Thus, it appears the series utilizes a strong Lowenfeldian lens toward art education. Further, it embodies Lowenfeld's model by positively contributing to the self-identity of the child viewer. As I detailed in Chapter 4, the program's on-camera dialogue is peppered with constant reminders of the *importance of your perspective* (italics mine). When students are encouraged to value their own unique perspective, they come to respect their own thoughts and instincts, thus reinforcing emotional growth.

With the series characterized in this way, *Eureka!* becomes useful in a whole new way: as a tangible example of a Lowenfeldian curriculum. The program would be well-suited for use in art education graduate and undergraduate programs. It is the perfect series for professors to show in university classrooms as an example of a child-centered art education program.

One of the most successful features of the series as a child-centered model is the way in which it delivers its message of purpose. By its very nature, the program shares information about the importance of artmaking – what we can gain from education in art, why art is valuable to our lives, and the ways in which we can access that value. And it

does so without stating these reasons explicitly. Art education students in a university classroom would be well-served to observe the *Eureka!* program as an actualized manifestation of a child-centered educational series.

POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the directions I could have undergone with my research would have involved consulting with a group of adolescent students. In this scenario, I would have shown the *Eureka!* series to a student audience, then used an interview or focus group methodology to gain insight into their reactions to the programming. This method of research remains open as a future possibility for *Eureka!* or a similar series. In this scenario, of course, the researcher would not be speculating about what messages the programming is communicating with various on-camera and text-based clues. Instead, he or she would be working to understand the series through the eyes of the student audience. He or she would formulate the research question to reflect what aspect of the student groups' viewing experience is of most interest to him/her. If this type of study were indeed conducted with *Eureka!* as the focus, it would be interesting to find out how the student reactions compared with my findings on its implicit and explicit messages.

Another direction that could be pursued by a future researcher would involve consultation with *Eureka!*'s producer, host and collaborators. It has been more than 15 years since the show was produced. Given the time that has passed, it would be fascinating to conduct a reflective study with producer Gordon Joseph Murray, Franz Sphon, and other key figures in the creation of the show. These individuals could reflect on their experience with the show and converse with the researcher on what they would do differently if they had the chance to go back in time. I predict that this would be an especially interesting and fruitful study if the show's creators have gained further

experience in art education, educational psychology, or a related field since their involvement in *Eureka!*.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology

Scholars in this field—indeed, in any field—need to be able to build upon the research of their predecessors. Ideally, a university environment facilitates this process of contributing to an existing body of research.

In this case, the information I needed to access for my research was housed in a slightly outdated format. *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series* was filmed in 1992, a time when many television programs were filmed on Beta SP format. This format was prevalent from the late 1980s to the late 1990s, so it is not surprising that the producers would have utilized it.

When I received the tapes for the first time, I saw that they were large and boxy, similar in appearance to the Beta tapes with which I had been familiar in the earlier part of my childhood, before VHS tapes became prevalent. I assumed that the University of Texas would have the appropriate tape players (called "decks") to accommodate this format.

As I found out, however, my department did not (and does not, as of July 2011) possess the technology to view these tapes. The Communications Department, however, did have a Beta SP deck. When I went to the department to seek access to this deck (in order to view the tapes), I found that students from outside the Communications Department were not allowed to use the equipment. After speaking to two different proctors from the Digital Media Center, which houses the Beta SP deck, I found that this rule was unyielding. The only way I could use the equipment, they told me, was if, (a) I

could get a student from the School of Communications to submit the tapes for me, or (b) if I could get a professor from the School of Communications to sponsor me. I am not acquainted with any such individuals.

After re-visiting the Communications lab several times, I found one proctor who was a bit more lenient, and he allowed me to use their Beta SP deck to view the tapes. I was not, however, allowed to use the department's service which would have transferred those tapes to an accessible format (i.e., DVD format, which would have allowed me to watch the tapes from a regular computer). I eventually gave in and paid to have the tapes professionally transferred to a viewable format.

Although I received reimbursement from my department for the expense, it seems to me that the university would benefit from having administrative systems in place that allow graduate students to use technology facilities in other departments (if their own department is lacking in such technology). Another option is for the Department of Art and Art History to purchase a Beta SP deck for such cases. If they invested in the technology, the department would be able to support researchers who need to access information housed in Beta SP format. This would aid students in conducting research that would benefit the university community.

Expansion of the List of 45 Purposes for Art Education

As I mentioned previously, the list of 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) was vital to my research. This list represents what is likely the most comprehensive compilation of the various purposes that have been put forth as justifications for teaching art in schools and elsewhere. Although the list is exhaustive, I

came to see that the *Eureka!* series conceives of art education in one way that is not represented in the list presented by Bolin.

I have established that the program posits various purposes for artmaking among students. The most commonly used purpose in the series is Purpose #33, "express creative thinking." And, as I have also said, most of the series draws from purposes that exist within Group A—the category that relates to developing one's unique voice through self-expression, imagination, and problem solving. However, I noticed that many of the activities that are undertaken by students in the program (or suggested by the teacher's manual) are done in groups. In Episode 1, students break into pairs to make relief print from nature. In Episode 3, groups of students invent creative advertisements to attract museum-goers to a real-life exhibit at a local museum of their choice. In Episode 6, students must pair with partners to create shadow sculptures. And in Episode 8, Spohn and the students spend the episode building an enormous mosaic out of gumballs.

These group activities reveal an additional purpose for artmaking: collaboration and teamwork. Although the act of collaboration seems to be a secondary purpose in many of the activities, it is nonetheless supported by the programming and activities assigned.

As I watched the series, I learned that the teamwork aspect of art education is realized throughout. This makes sense; the art activities suggested in *Eureka!* are particularly well-suited for teaching cooperation because of their open-ended nature. The often seen, creative, non-linear quality of art learning means that multiple solutions to a problem exist. Therefore, a curricular setup in which a group of students collaborate is ideal. In this model, having a variety of opinions and multiple points of view contributes to the likelihood of artistic innovation.

In light of *Eureka!*'s implicit use of this purpose of art education, I propose the amendment of Bolin's list of 45 recognized purposes. I suggest that the list be expanded to include a Purpose #46, which could read "learn teamwork and collaboration skills."

This concept of the teamwork aspect of art education is aptly stated by David Burton (2001). He suggests that a final exhibition of student work—an activity that requires collaboration among classmates—is vital to a comprehensive art curriculum:

> Leveraging social dynamics among students can be an effective teaching strategy…When skillfully arranged, art exhibitions present artwork under ideal social conditions with the intention of influencing others in a positive way, and in return, allow the exhibitors to bask in the glow of the public's esteem. The entire process, from selecting a theme to designing and installing a show, to orchestrating an opening, demand commitment, cooperation, collaboration, and constructive interaction toward a common goal. (p. 42)

Burton proposes that teachers who display their students' work without involving students in the process miss an opportunity for growth. An essential part of art education, he says, is the group process of putting on an exhibition—the parameters of which should be determined by the students. The value that Burton assigns to this process reflects a common principle between his writing and the *Eureka!* series, and that principle is centered in a belief that art education should develop students' collaborative abilities.

Student Demonstrations in *Eureka!*

The *Eureka!* series has nearly all the components of a Lowenfeldian model. Students are led to experience the world aesthetically in many ways—for example, by looking at their natural surroundings as containing artistic possibilities (Episode 1), by seeing artistic possibilities in so-called "junk" (Episode 2), by learning how to look at and experience sculpture (Episode 6), and by seeing the "mosaic" component of ordinary

objects, like television screens and computer screens (Episode 8). As I have discussed, the expression of creativity is an undercurrent running throughout the series, consistent with Lowenfeld's writings in *Creative and Mental Growth* (1957). The experience of creating art in *Eureka!* is framed as a joyful, playful, and experimental process. And, just as Lowenfeld has modeled, it is the process of artmaking that is valued over the final product.

Moreover, Spohn's demonstrations embody the group approach that Lowenfeld advocated in the 3rd edition of *Creative and Mental Growth* (1957). Says Lowenfeld: "I have often been asked whether children are not restricted in their creativeness when the teacher is using classroom motivations, that is, when the whole group is motivated simultaneously by one experience" (p. 3). To this he replies: "As long as the child has the freedom to use his *own* mode of expression, his creativity remains free" (p. 3). This recalls *Eureka!*'s style of demonstrations in which Spohn closes the episode by giving a tangible example of the type of art that students can make in response to the episode. Although he models the artmaking in which students will engage post-episode, the program and teacher's guide leave projects open-ended for student experimentation.

The program's producer, Gordon Joseph Murray, explains this decision in the written introduction to the teacher's manual. He says: "The episodes of this series provide a path for a teacher to follow, and some things to try, but they stop short of saying, 'Do it just this way if you want to experience success'" (Murray & Spohn, 1992, Foreword). Instead, Murray says, the program relies on the guidance of a good teacher as a necessary supplement to the series.

The overall child-centered theme of the series is useful to identify in order to plan for the future. As a successful, engaging model of art educational television programming, I propose that *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series* could be continued into a

third season (a second season, which I did not analyze as part of my research, was produced after the first season). Or, if the creators of *Eureka!* were amenable to it, a series based on the program's child-centered principles could be produced. My main recommendation for the new series, as I will detail below, would be consistent with *Eureka!*'s Lowenfeldian flavor.

The one change that I could make to a future installment of *Eureka!*, or similar type episodes, would involve the demonstrations performed. In the eight episodes that I have analyzed in this research, Spohn makes use of his artistic talent to create something. This "something" varies according to episode, as I detailed in Chapter 4. Since Spohn creates all artworks that are made on-camera, viewers have a somewhat limited conception of what projects can be generated with the medium discussed. I propose that this could be remedied by the inclusion of students in the demonstration. For example, let us examine Episode 7, "Serious Business." After visiting toy designers in their studio, Spohn creates his own toys using simple materials. One of his toys is a hand-held maze-like game through which a tiny ball can travel. His game utilizes the same concept as an arcade game in which the user must tilt a surface to move a small ball through a maze while simultaneously avoiding the holes and traps through which the ball could fall. This is one of three toys he creates in his demonstration. While watching this for the first time, I became curious about what types of toys students would create in reaction to "Serious Business."

During the episode itself, Spohn often interacts with students. In many instances, small groups of students are filmed accompanying him on his outings, and he asks them questions that are relevant to the lesson. They do not, however, typically make art while Spohn engages in the artmaking process. In my ideal version of *Eureka!*, a few students would be filmed following Spohn's spoken directions as he gives them during his

demonstrations. This would enable students to see multiple interpretations of a single theme, using a single medium. For instance, one child might conceive of toy-making as the creation of costumes or props that enable consumers to dress up as different characters in a skit or vignette. Or another student might create a miniature 3-D mural on a fixed surface in which different elements can be moved around to create various scenes. Whatever the student creation, it would add to student viewers' perception that the activity (toy-making, in this instance) was within their grasp as young adolescents. This student component would reinforce the notion that these activities are within the capacity of artists of *all* levels, not just a professional like Spohn.

If there were to be a continuation of a similar series, it would do well to draw from the style and techniques utilized by the *Eureka!* program and the program's host, Franz Spohn. I believe that the specific components of *Eureka!* are the traits responsible for its effectiveness as a program. Such components, as I have discussed, include the charismatic "edutainer"-type host, the projects that draw upon the natural interests of the young adolescent audience, and the spirit of open-ended experimentation that facilitates self-expression. A future program would have to include these same features.

The other trait that sets *Eureka!* apart is its single-minded interest in the emotional, intellectual, and artistic advancement of the child. Although this may seem to be an obvious component of children's art educational programming, it is not as common as one might hope. According to Barbara Selznick (2008), most children's shows (even educational ones) are written with international co-production in mind. Since the success of internationally co-produced television shows depend on their ability to connect with audiences of varying nationalities, they are necessarily culturally vague. Thus, these types of educational programs must exclusively espouse universal values such a friendship, love, cooperation, and independence. Unfortunately, says Selznick, the link between the

forms of children's empowerment and the capitalistic interests of the producers is always evident. Young viewers would no doubt be better served by programs that offer lessons in cultural citizenship:

> As opposed to consumer citizenship, cultural citizenship seems to offer more empowering opportunities for children's programming. By including characters of different nationalities, races, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic realms, children's television has the opportunity to normalize difference, give "others" a voice, and tell children that alternative identities and practices are okay. (Selznick, 2008, p. 121)

CLOSING

This study has discussed art educational theory through a lengthy analysis of the 1995 educational PBS television program, *Eureka! The Creative Arts Series*. I have applied the 45 recognized purposes for art education in public schools (and elsewhere) presented by Bolin (in Congdon, Hicks, Bolin and Blandy, 2008, p. 9-10) to the program in order to discern its central messages about art education.

In Chapter 3, I delineated my process of grouping the various purposes into broad, overarching categories, each one of which contained several of the 45 justifications for teaching art. In Chapter 4, I utilized a storytelling-type format to orient my reader to the tone and pacing of the series; I summarized each of the eight episodes and provided description of the accompanying follow-up in the teacher's guide.

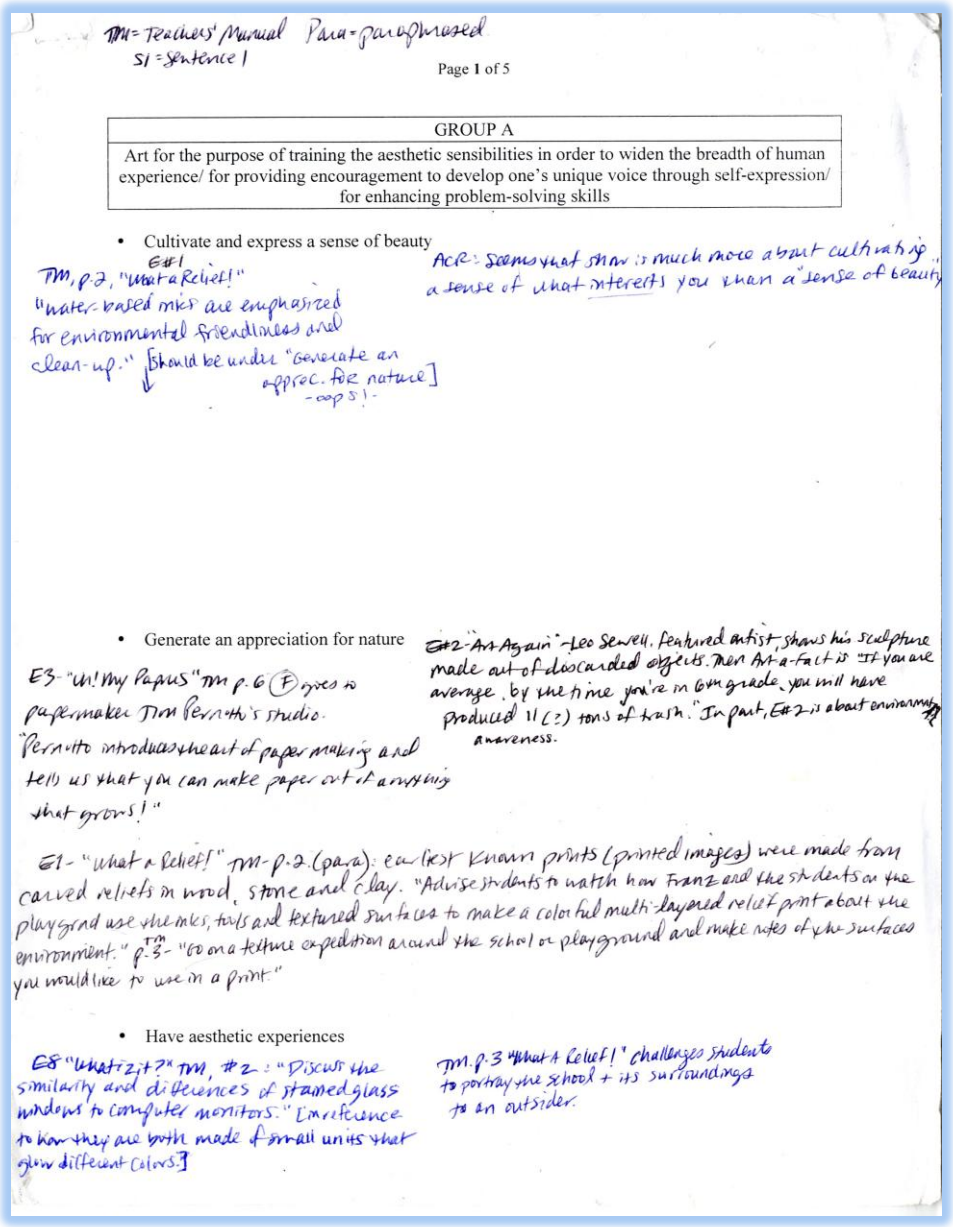
In accordance with my particular research method, I determined which purposes were most heavily represented in the series—and used this determination to answer my central research question. I used Chapter 5 to apply the network of purposes to individual episodes of this television program. In a format similar to the one used in Chapter 4, I presented each of the eight episodes with an explanation of the overtones and messages

implied or stated within each one. It was in Chapter 5 that I revealed that Purpose #33, "express creative thinking," was most heavily supported by the *Eureka!* program. As I explained, my research indicated creativity, experimentation, and discovery were the concepts most heavily espoused within the series. I also discussed Spohn's style of communicating with a student audience and his technique for imparting a Lowenfeldian flavor to the series in aggregate.

In this closing chapter, I have made suggestions that relate to the series and to the list of 45 purposes that was used as a framework for my research. I proposed that Bolin's 2008 list be amended to include a 46th purpose, which would posit artmaking and art learning as a way to practice teamwork and collaboration skills. I have made recommendations for the continuation of this research. Future studies could make use of the input from a modern student audience as data. Or, to expand in a different direction, a researcher could interview the producers of *Eureka!* to glean knowledge of their perceptions.

I also suggested that the University of Texas Department of Art and Art History acquire a Beta SP deck, which would aid future students and researchers in accessing and contributing to the body of knowledge in our field. Lastly, I made an argument for the continuation of the *Eureka!* program, but with a slight alteration: the addition of a student component in which young adolescents (the program's target audience) complete the art projects alongside Spohn. I see a rich future in art educational programming and the continuation of art educational television models in the spirit of *Eureka!*, which would persist in teaching creativity, imagination, problem-solving, experimentation and discovery, thereby enriching the student experience and furthering some of the most noble goals of our field.

Appendix



TM = Teachers' Manual Para = paraphrased
S1 = Sentence 1

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GROUP A
Art for the purpose of training the aesthetic sensibilities in order to widen the breadth of human experience/ for providing encouragement to develop one's unique voice through self-expression/ for enhancing problem-solving skills

- Cultivate and express a sense of beauty

E#1 TM, p.2, "What a Relief!" "water-based inks are emphasized for environmental friendliness and clean-up." [Should be under "Generate an apprec. for nature" - cap S!]

ACR: Seems that show is much more about cultivating a sense of what interests you than a "sense of beauty"

- Generate an appreciation for nature

E#2 "Art Again" - Leo Sewell, featured artist, shows his sculpture made out of discarded objects. Then Art-a-fact is "If you are average, by the time you're in 6th grade, you will have produced 11 (!) tons of trash." In part, E#2 is about environmental awareness.

E3 "Oh! My Papier" TM p. 6 (F) goes to papermaker Tom Pernetti's studio. "Pernetti introduces the art of paper making and tells us that you can make paper out of anything that grows!"

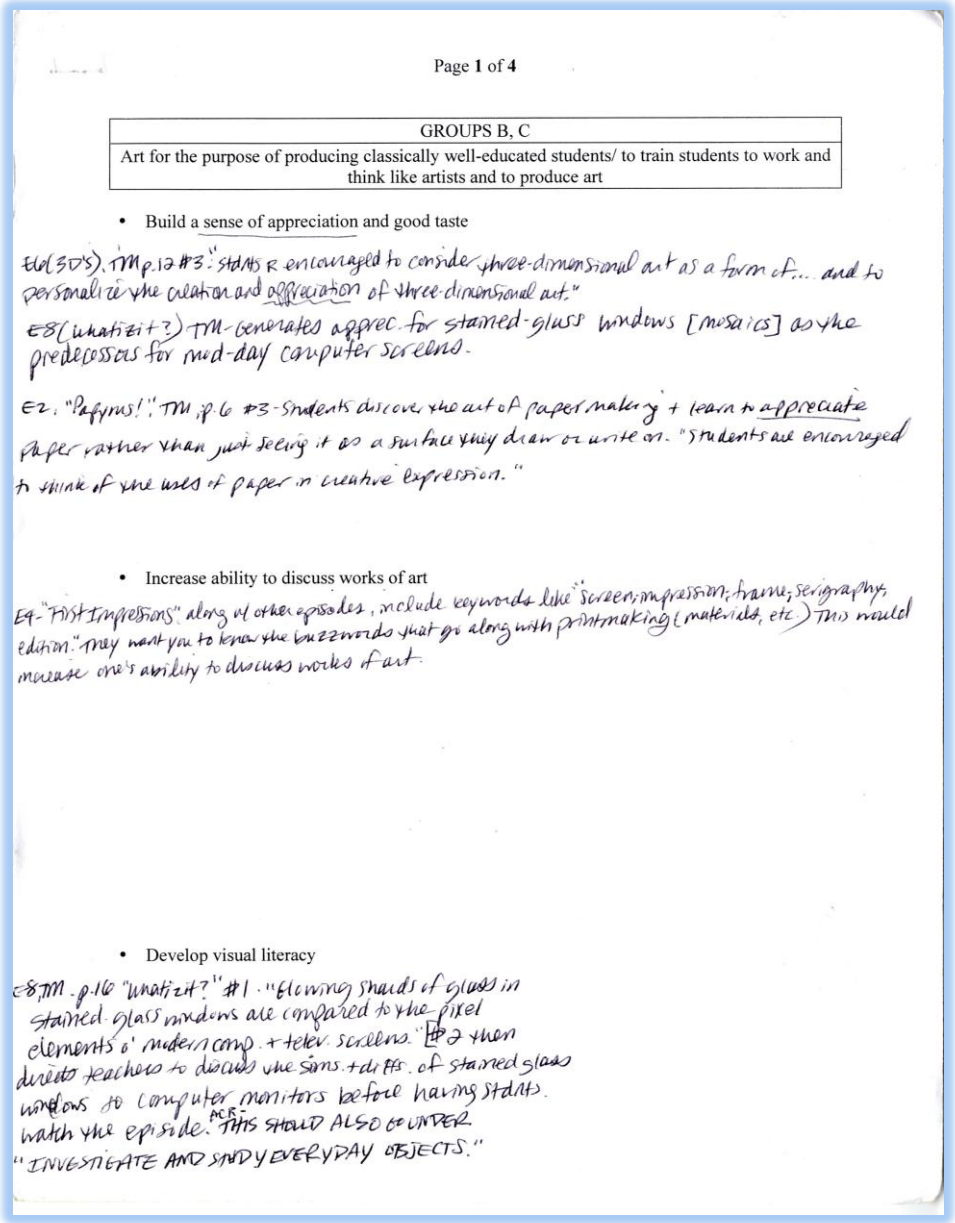
E1 - "what a Relief!" TM-p.2.(para): earliest known prints (printed images) were made from carved reliefs in wood, stone and clay. "Advise students to watch how Franz and the students on the playground use the inks, tools and textured surfaces to make a colorful multi-layered relief print about the environment." p.3 TM - "Go on a texture expedition around the school or playground and make notes of the surfaces you would like to use in a print."

- Have aesthetic experiences

E# "What is it?" TM, #2: "Discuss the similarity and differences of stained glass windows to computer monitors." [reference to how they are both made of small units that show different colors.]

TM p.3 "What a Relief!" challenges students to portray the school + its surroundings to an outsider.

Figure 4 - Example of my note-taking method for information classified within the first group, Group A.



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GROUPS B, C
Art for the purpose of producing classically well-educated students/ to train students to work and think like artists and to produce art

- Build a sense of appreciation and good taste

E6(3D's). TM p.12 #3: "Students are encouraged to consider three-dimensional art as a form of... and to personalize the creation and appreciation of three-dimensional art."
E8(what is it?) TM-Generates apprec. for stained-glass windows [mosaics] as the predecessors for mod-day computer screens.
E2. "Papyrus!" TM, p.6 #3-Students discover the art of paper making + learn to appreciate paper rather than just seeing it as a surface they draw or write on. "Students are encouraged to think of the uses of paper in creative expression."

- Increase ability to discuss works of art

E4-"First Impressions" along w/ other episodes, include keywords like "screen; impression; frame; serigraphy, edition." They want you to know the buzzwords that go along with printmaking (materials, etc) This would increase one's ability to discuss works of art.

- Develop visual literacy

E8, TM. p.16 "what is it?" #1. "Glowing shards of glass in stained glass windows are compared to the pixel elements of modern comp. + telev. screens." #2 then directs teachers to discuss the sims. + diffs. of stained glass windows to computer monitors before having students watch the episode. ACR- THIS SHOULD ALSO GO UNDER "INVESTIGATE AND STUDY EVERYDAY OBJECTS."

Figure 5 - Example of my note-taking method for information classified within the second and third groups, Group B and Group C.

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